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THE WORLD-VIEW *of the* FOURTH GOSPEL

A GENETIC STUDY

By
THOMAS WEARING

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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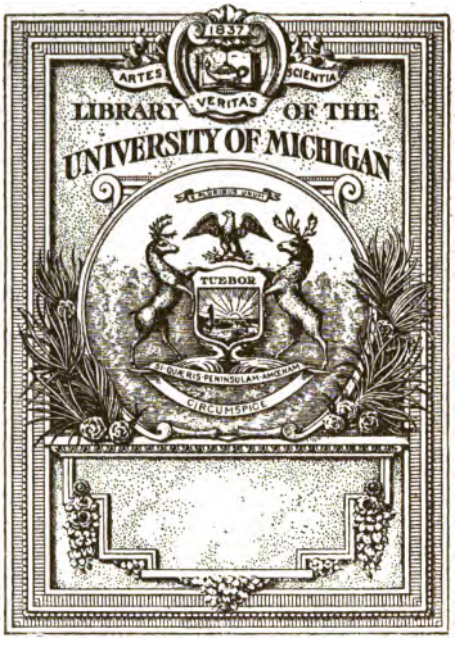

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THE BAKER & TAYLOR COMPANY
NEW YORK

THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON AND EDINBURGH

THE MARUZEN-KABUSHIKI-KAISHA
TOKYO, OSAKA, KYOTO, FUKUOKA, SENDAI

THE MISSION BOOK COMPANY
SHANGHAI

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Published July 1918

Composed and Printed By
The University of Chicago Press
Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	TYPICAL PRE-CHRISTIAN HELLENISTIC WORLD-VIEWS	1
II.	THE JOHANNINE UNIVERSE: ITS ORIGIN, STRUCTURE, AND DESTINY	17
III.	MAN AND THE UNIVERSE IN THE JOHANNINE WORLD-VIEW	35
IV.	NEW TESTAMENT WORLD-VIEWS AND THEIR INFLUENCE	53
	SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	68
	INDEX	71

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CHAPTER I

TYPICAL PRE-CHRISTIAN HELLENISTIC WORLD-VIEWS

The primary purpose of the following investigation is to present various thought-phenomena which constitute the intellectual universe inhabited by the writer—or writers—to whom civilization owes that remarkable Christian literary effort known as the Gospel of John. It must constantly be borne in mind that the Gospel is literature of a distinctive religious cast. The paramount concern of religion is not so much the creation as the conservation of such values as best meet the experiential test in the life of the individual or the community.[1] As a writer holding a brief for the Christian religion of certain thinkers in the Mediterranean area of the late first century A.D., the author of the Fourth Gospel naturally presents the data of that religion in such a way as to conserve the values accepted and approved by that particular group and apprehensible also to the wider group of prospective Christian converts from the other Hellenistic religions. It is this which distinguishes the Fourth Gospel from the rest of the New Testament writings, certainly from the other three Gospels. The group of Christians represented by the writer has a different world-view from the groups associated in the appearance of other early Christian writings. The historical figure standing at the center of religious life and thought is the same for all. It is the world-view, the point of view of the universe, that is different for each.

Every self-conscious human has a world-view. The unreflective mind may not relate very cogently the various elements in its cosmos. Yet in so far as that mind finds religious expression a particular and characteristic world-view, accepted uncritically through the media of group-inheritance or modified according to the personal attainments of the individual, will reveal itself in the religion held as satisfying personal needs. The theology of the average man, as well as that of the erudite philosopher, is set in molds which are fashioned by his whole view of the

[1] "Thus Plato, like every honest philosopher, utilized his own personal experiences as the key with which to interpret human life, nay, all things in general."—Paulsen, *Ethics* (trans.), p. 48.

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universe and his relation to it.[1] Sanctions administered by group-authority will to a certain extent retard this remolding of world-view. Especially is this true with regard to sanctions operating under the aegis of religion. Athens in the name of religion puts the cup of poison hemlock to the lips of Socrates. The zealous churchmen of Italy make life a burden for Galileo. In the latter connection it is interesting to note that centuries before Galileo the same heliocentric view of the universe had stirred up trouble for its protagonists. It had been put forward tentatively by Aristarchus of Samos, and Plutarch quotes Cleanthes the Stoic to the effect that the Greeks should have put Aristarchus on trial for his impiety as one who proposed to disturb "the hearth of the universe." The trouble was not so much the matter of giving the sun a central place in the universe, but rather of considering the earth as simply one of the attendant planets. This last notion was humiliating indeed to the Stoic theologian, who felt that human beings inhabiting the earth held first rank in creation and that the entire universe evidenced but one purpose, namely, the ministration of welfare to gods and men. To preserve the dignity of man, therefore, he must maintain at all hazards his geocentric theory.[2]

Apart from overt obstruction of the reshaping process by group-authority there is also the group thought-habit which is ever potent in even the reflective and well-furnished intellect. The most finished product in the way of a world-view cannot in the very nature of things be other than a compromise between the heritage of the past and the achievements of the present. The mind of the Hellenist moved along thought-pathways well marked out by earlier intellectual *voyageurs*. Intellectual orthodoxy played an important part in the evolution of Greek speculation. To think correctly made the measure of the man, for, according to the Socratic doctrine, right knowledge meant virtue. With the Jew the necessary lay in the realm of practice rather than in the realm of the intellect. As far as philosophizing belonged to the Hebrew mind the widest latitude obtained so long as the ritual requirements of the Torah received due observance. For the Greek, orthodoxy

[1] "A man's religion, if it is genuine, contains the summed-up and concentrated meaning of his life; and indeed it can have no value except as it does so. And it is even more obvious that the theology of a philosopher is the ultimate outcome of his whole view of the universe and particularly of his conception of the nature of man. It is therefore impossible to show the real effect and purport of the former without exhibiting very carefully and fully its relations to the latter."—Caird, *Evolution of Theology in Greek Philosophy*, Preface, p. viii.

[2] Arnold, *Roman Stoicism*, p. 179.

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dominated thought; for the Jew, practice. The hatred of the Jewish leaders toward Jesus was engendered by his attitude on such matters as Sabbath observance and Temple ritual. Heresy trials in the history of Christianity are a Greek and not a Hebrew heritage. Yet in spite of this operation of group-authority for both Jew and Hellene, and somewhat apart from it, may be found thought-tendencies associated closely with the group-habit in both. Evidence bearing on this may be seen in the movements of thought which came into juxtaposition in the Mediterranean world of the Hellenistic period.

For the Semite a world-view of a heaven above and a sheol below the earthly plane, all coming into existence at the fiat of a transcendent heavenly being, constantly dominated his thought-habit. For him, man generally, but particularly the race to which he belonged, possessed the power of divine communication and fellowship, however ignored or etiolated, as the earthly representative and image of this transcendent being. Immemorial story grooved such cosmical ideas deep in the Hebrew mind and seriously hampered it in becoming at home in a world of wider thought. This is seen on the one hand in the prevailing uniformity of religious philosophy among the Jewish writers, and on the other in their odd casuistry when they tried, as did Philo, to make some change of world-view in the light of Hellenistic intellectual achievement.[1] The Greek had an entirely different way of looking at things. Homer could view water or ocean as the origin of all things, gods and men included. For Hesiod the vague cosmic substance which he called chaos made the universe possible. And indeed the atheistic creation-theory of the fifth-century, Ephesian, materialistic philosopher Heraclitus, "Neither God nor man made the cosmos," found many adherents in later Greek speculation.[2]

Opposed to the retarding forces of religious sanction, group-authority, and thought-habit in the reshaping of the world-view is the personal attainment of the individual in an ever-changing environment. The progress of religious life lies this way. The ideas of the superearthly, the supersensible, the superhuman, of God, heaven, hell, the life after

[1] The proverb ἢ Πλάτων φιλωνίζει ἢ Φίλων πλατωνίζει illustrates the Philonic method in relation to Plato as viewed by early interpreters. In his *Stromateis*, Clement of Alexandria calls Philo a Pythagorean. Eusebius claims that he follows both Plato and Pythagoras. Modern interpreters class him sometimes with the Stoics and sometimes with the neo-Pythagoreans (cf. E. Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*[3], III, 365).

[2] L. R. Farnell, *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion*, p. 121.

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death, the other world—all these spring from the onward urge of the human spirit and take color from the surroundings in which they find expression. A glance at the development of religious ideas will serve to confirm this position.

Man comes to find that there is such a thing as controllable reality. He produces changes in the physical sphere by means of effort. Gradually tools for the task are fashioned and a technique of more or less successful control comes into existence. Apart from this sphere there appear to the primitive man forces outside the field of the senses, malignant or benignant as the case may be. Deluge and lightning—inspiring fear and destroying food and life—disease, physical suffering, death; such uncontrollable factors in human experience make the individual dependent upon an unreachable unknown. Having won out in some measure in the struggle with the outside world of nature man is emboldened to invent means of coping with this spirit-universe. He tries to establish relations with this world by means of prayers, gifts, flattery, and objurgation addressed to its inhabitants. A technique arises in this field of human endeavor. A distinct class develops in connection with the carrying out of it. Tradition makes this class possess extraordinary powers, and the idea of a higher being comes into play.[1] The magical act of the cult gives way to the ordered religious process in which the inner life of the individual recognizes and obeys a higher divine will. It is the working force of the invisible that creates a basic category for the primitive religious life.[2] Then by means of analogy religious thinking creates doctrines of the origin of the world and man and the whither of all life-processes.[3] The interpretation of reality, the evaluation of life, the recognition of the practical ideal—these enter the thinking of the individual in his relation to the invisible and create his world-view. As he "rounds to a separate mind" and lives his own distinct life each human being discovers the elements of a particular

[1] Ames, *The Psychology of Religious Experience*, pp. 168–94; Coe, *The Psychology of Religion*, pp. 76–118.

[2] Foster, Lecture Notes, *Psychology of Religion.*

[3] "Without doubt a religion is not primarily a view of the world and of life, a doctrine of divine and human things. Rather it is the creation of a distinctive world of reality, the development of a new life under the dominant conception of a higher sphere. The life that here grows up is conscious of being raised far above mere doctrine, and it will at times stoutly defend its independence of the latter. But it could not be of an enlightened sort without possessing in itself and developing from itself convictions respecting the sum total of human existence."—Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 71.

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world-view impinging upon his thought in immediate and directive potency. And in the organization of his life as affected by the environment in which it is worked out—as also the new religious experiences through which he passes—these elements arrange themselves into new relations modifying inevitably the structure of his world-view.

Two definitions will serve to demonstrate the practical nature of the world-view. According to August Baur it is—

> not a purely theoretical relation to nature, although the theoretic moment is undeniably contained in it—not a purely disinterested apprehension and knowledge of the world as a sum of particulars; it includes much more a practical personal interest in itself; for it is a judgment of worth upon the world as a whole, as a single given magnitude in space and time in relation to the life-aim, the life-determination of the viewing subject. It is a consideration and valuation of existence in space and time in the light of our own proper life-aim, which in the most general sense of the word we are able to designate as a moral one.

Ritschl, applying the adjective "religious" to the word *Weltanschauung*, says that it is grounded in the fact that man in some degree distinguishes himself in worth from the natural appearances surrounding him. For Ritschl the world-view is "an interpretation of the course of nature in this sense that the exalted spiritual powers—or spiritual Power—which rule in and over nature maintain and confirm to the personal spirit its claims, or its independence against the limitations arising from nature or from the natural workings of human society."[1] Thus it will be seen that the various world-views operating in the shaping of religious thought are not like so many pearls on a thread, detached and separate entities. Rather are they expressions of a continuous and developmental life-process, each assuredly taking form and color according to the time and place associated with its appearances, yet each vitally connected with the yesterday and the tomorrow of thought and conduct.

In the early attempts at a correlation of the facts of the universe as they appeared to the human mind many elements, religious, rational, ethical, and poetical, were mingled together in such a way as to leave little basis for classification. From the period inaugurated by the pre-Socratic thinkers there emerge at intervals world-views more or less differentiable. That held by Democritus and borrowed from him in some degree by later schools, such as that of Epicurus, views the universe as composed of "an indefinite number of indestructible particles acting

[1] Orr, *Christian View of God and the World*, pp. 422 ff., quotes and discusses these definitions.

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independently through forces within themselves toward certain determined ends." To use a somewhat clumsy terminology, this may be called a materialistic, mechanistic view of the world. In modern times this view has many adherents. A second main class comes under the name of theistic. It includes monotheism, polytheism, and pantheism, for all of these predicate a life-principle as fundamental in causation and only differ in identifying it with a single or plural deific hypothesis apart from, or at one with, the universe.[1] It is within this class that the Christian world-view as pictured in the Fourth Gospel takes its place. In order that it may be better understood a discussion of the different yet related world-views constituting the milieu from which this Gospel sprang is necessary.

The thought of Hellenistic times, as also the thought of all Western civilization, derives largely from Plato, and therefore his work may very well mark the commencement of this survey. In examining this the difficulty of rightly interpreting his language is immediately apparent. He is at once the philosopher and the artist. "Didactic statement and poetic myth in Plato often merge imperceptibly into one another," writes Eucken.[2] Yet the main energy of Plato is directed toward finding that which is good and valuable in ennobling the life-values. His world-view is dominantly dualistic with the universe of ideas set over against the phenomenal world. This latter is too disintegrated, too mutable, for life to be based upon it with any degree of hope. Socrates with his doctrine of thought and the nature of concepts had opened the way for the recognition of a higher sphere. Yet he predicated only the universality of human thought. Plato goes a step farther.[3] He avers that the concept cannot be true unless it operates beyond human thought and corresponds to a reality in *things*. To him knowledge is not altogether dependent on uncertain opinions, but is produced by permanent conceptual entities. Thus he rises to the belief that there exists in the *All* an invisible immutable world, a realm of thought-existences beyond this fleeting world of sense. This ideal world stands in sharp antithesis to the world of appearances in which difference creates conflict and conflict leads to the endless mutation of life and death. The world of appearances is so far real and divine as it is a reflection of the divine intelligence. Yet being only a reflection it remains undivine and

[1] See Hibben, *The Problems of Philosophy*, chap. ii, pp. 59–77, for a discussion of speculation on the world-problem.

[2] Eucken, *op. cit.*, pp. 16, 17.

[3] Eucken, *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 19.

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unreal.[1] The visible universe is created by the divine artificer after the eternal patterns furnished by the invisible, unchanging world of ideas. The universe is a living creature endowed with soul and intelligence by the providence of God. The soul is a mediating existence bridging the gulf between the eternal intelligence, the νόησις νοήσεως, and the transitory world of sense, between man and God.[2] It is an absolutely permanent substance; therefore the actual number of souls remains ever the same. It is of the same nature as *being* and as such is immortal. The grosser elements which have attached themselves to it in the phenomenal universe may be cast aside and thus the soul may be perfected.

Aristotle's view of the world may be appreciated more readily in comparison with that of his master, Plato. He agrees with Plato that human life is to be understood only from the standpoint of the whole of reality, that human existence finds its source in the cosmos, that intelligence unites man to the universe and is the essence of human *being*.[3] Like the Academic he attempts to explain the universe on the principle of Anaxagoras, that "all things were in chaos till reason came to arrange them," and endeavors to overcome the resultant dualism of form and matter by subjecting the latter to the former, the world of conflict and change to the unchanging, pure intelligence.[4]

Farther than this Aristotle will not travel with his teacher. The ultimate aim of Plato was not only to demonstrate the unity of all things but to set forth this unity in a comprehensive system of thought organically connected throughout yet displaying its distinguishable elements. The dominant purpose of the Peripatetic was to account for the whole by a detailed examination of its parts, to fix each element in its place as distinct from the rest.[5] For Plato the eternality in truth and beauty is understood only in the separation of the world of essence from the world of appearance. For Aristotle this is not necessary. He is concerned with demonstrating the unity and beauty of all reality, with seeing the universe as an "empire of reason," and consequently sets aside the Platonic doctrine of ideas as separating the actual world

[1] Caird, *op. cit.*, I, 226.

[2] "The soul in its totality has the care of all inanimate and soulless being everywhere, and traverses the whole universe appearing in diverse forms."—Plato *Phaedrus* xxiv. 63.

[3] Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 46.

[4] Caird, *op. cit.*, II, 33.

[5] *Ibid.*, I, 203.

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from the world of real being.[1] The transcendent deity of Plato is for Aristotle the source of reason and the origin—although very remote—of the motion pervading the universe. Eucken goes so far as to say that Aristotle denies to the deity any activity within the world and thus shuts out the necessity for religion, for providence, and for the moral order of the world. Edward Caird, on the other hand, claims that although at first Aristotle moves away from Plato in many ways, such as repudiating the Platonic idea of souls being made in various degrees of obscuration and the doctrine of soul-transmigration, yet in the end the Aristotelian world-view sees the universe as a teleological whole. This purposive unity finds its principle in the pure nature of mind, or self-consciousness, a principle realizing itself in every rational being and itself eternally realized in God.

The advance of Aristotle is seen in this: he repudiates the mystic tendency of Plato which regarded the connection of the soul and body as accidental or external, and stresses the idea that human happiness consists, not in escape from life, but in complete rational activity for the individual. Virtue for him is not the Platonic liberation from social bonds, but is to be found by the individual in social relationships where he may be able to "live well." This is the εὖ ζῆν of Aristotle. The ideal life is that of calm contemplation through an extended period. This is Aristotle's θεωρία,[2] which according to his notion creates a rational foundation for the εὖ ζῆν. A new point of view is also observed in Aristotle's treatment of the soul as subject to diseases (παθήματα).[3] Here the practical philosopher is given a place to assist in the cure of souls by the use of reason in the expulsion of the various diseases affecting their welfare. Thus for Aristotle the philosopher becomes the coadjutor of the physician.

In the period following Aristotle it is this practical tendency which comes to the fore in the thinking of the Mediterranean peoples. The currents of cosmopolitanism which set in with the Macedonian triumph continued to flow through the period of Greek and Roman domination in the life of people brought together for the first time into relationship with a real world-empire. As the conquered peoples entered into the

[1] Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 46.

[2] ". . . . Aristotle conceives the life of man as consisting of the exercise of reason, and as comprising two distinct forms of that exercise, θεωρία and πρᾶξις, the pure activity of contemplation and the mixed and imperfect activity of the practical life."—Caird, *op. cit.*, I, 295.

[3] Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

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wider world-relations national and tribal sanctions tended to retreat or to take on new forms. This brought greater freedom of thought and conduct to the individual[1] and at the same time a feeling that he could no longer be absolutely sure of the universe which made its influence potent in his life.[2] In connection with this rise of individualism is seen the growth of such philosophico-religious systems as that of the Stoics, where each is provided with a guide for the journey of life, where philosophy becomes the preceptress of conduct for the individual.

Stoicism has for its object the unifying of man's life in such a way as to put it beyond the care-creating clutch of external circumstance. In obeying his own nature the Stoic is conscious that he is in harmony with the law of the universe, a law which all things obey, but which it is the privilege of only rational beings to comprehend and to make the conscious rule of life.[3] The Stoic's world-view is monistic and is developed in opposition to the dualism which in Plato separates form and matter. To the Stoic, matter and form are simply aspects of one substance. All things flow from, and finally return to, the fiery breath, *τὸ πνεῦμα διάπυρον*, which is the quintessence of all matter. The Stoic was the intellectual heir of Heraclitus in this thought of the primary stuff as ever-living fire. All material bodies are interpenetrated by each other and by the ethereal fire.[4] All things came from this fire and ultimately all things must be reabsorbed into it. "The fire shall one day come, judge all things, and condemn them," said Heraclitus.[5]

True happiness for the followers of Zeno, Aristippus, and Cleanthes is found by following the guidance of the λόγος, "the universal reason." Complete union with this will give him *ἀταραξία*, "an imperturbable independence," and an inner mastery over things. His goal of effort is the *πολιτεία τοῦ κόσμου*, a world-citizenship created by the union of all rational beings.[6] He is not concerned to seek out the future of soul-existence so much as to fortify the entire man in the present struggle with the world. That the Stoic attempt in this direction proved very successful is noted in the remarkable spread of this religious philosophy and in its long continuance in ministration to the needs of the Hellenistic

[1] "Aber diese freie Entfaltung und starke Eigenart der Persönlichkeit in den obersten Schichten der Gesellschaft ist doch nur das Symptom der allgemeinen stark individualistischen Richtung der Zeit."—Wendland, *Die hellenistisch-römische Kultur*, p. 47.

[2] Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 77.

[3] Caird, *op. cit.*, II, 76.

[4] Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 35, n. 36.

[6] Caird, *op. cit.*, II, 201; cf. also Wendland, *op. cit.*, pp. 43, 45.

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world. The famous hymn of Cleanthes[1] strikes a note of undoubted optimism, and in spite of the allusions made by critics to the cold manner and callous arrogance of the Stoics it is coming to be acknowledged that in the main their teaching and their kind of life induced real happiness.[2] "From the few glimpses we have of their inmost feelings and that attitude to the universe which constitutes the essence of religion, what is most clearly distinguishable is joy and gratitude, serene confidence and unwavering submission," writes R. D. Hicks.

If the Stoic reaches happiness in boldly defying the universe in which he finds himself the Epicurean is desirous to surrender himself to it as agreeably as possible. The one strives to rise superior to all the vicissitudes of earthly life; the other is determined to make a pleasing use of the same materials. For the Epicurean the universe is a fortuitous concourse of atoms,[3] this following the teaching of Democritus of Abdera. Such order and system as may be found in the universe are reflected in the intrinsic nature of the atoms by virtue of which they seize upon each other, forming themselves into separate entities. The platonic fore-ordained necessity, εἱρμαρμένη, which was taken over by the Stoics is resolutely denied by the Epicureans, and the divination accompanying this is dismissed as mere superstition.[4] The gods are celestial beings beyond thought and care for human affairs. Immortality of the soul, which meant so much to Plato, is nothing but a pleasant fiction. Death closes all existence as far as human beings are concerned. The present claims the attention of the wise man. The *summum bonum* is the agreeable life or, viewed negatively, freedom from mental trouble about death, the gods, or the future life. The practical outcome of such a world-view was the avoidance of social burdens such as the marriage tie[5] and civic duties—so carefully performed by the Stoic—and the cultivation by active missionary propaganda of societies resembling religious communities.[6]

[1] See hymn quoted in Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 85–87; cf. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean*, pp. 14–16.

[2] Hicks, *op. cit.*, pp. 18, 108.

[3] Lucretius *De rerum natura* ii. 80–140; quoted in Cicero *De natura deorum* i. 20.

[4] *Op. cit.* i. 20.

[5] Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 84; Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

[6] "Epicurus and his disciples proselytized, and closely organized their society. It extended throughout the whole of Greece, a state within a state, having a fixed constitution and held together, not only by correspondence and itinerant preaching, but by the interchange of material assistance. Epicurus knew how to create an *esprit de corps* which has rightly been likened to that existing in the early Christian communities."—Ivo Bruns, quoted by Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 84.

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Over against the followers of Zeno and Epicurus in the centuries from the midst of whose life and thought came the Christian writings stood the adherents of the later Academy who went by the name of Skeptics. They called the accidental-concourse theory of the Epicureans mere rubbish. They told the Stoic that if, according to his idea, man received reason from the gods, then the gods are ultimately responsible for all the good and the ill that follow the exercise of reason. Stoic and Epicurean alike were strongly individualistic. For both, the main effort was to make man strong in himself and either independent of, or tolerant to, the world. To the Skeptic both were wrong in basing the independence of the individual upon some belief in the nature of the world as exterior to the thought of man concerning it. He claimed that no such support is necessary. Knowledge comes only through sense-perception. Even those sensations and ideas which make knowledge possible are but states of individual subjectivity. Man cannot know things as they are, but only as they appear to be. Edward Caird sees in this purely subjective world-view of the Skeptic the bridge by means of which religious speculation passed over into neo-Platonism with its ultimate losing of the subjective consciousness in a non-rational ecstatic union with the *Absolute Being*. The individualism of the Stoic and the Epicurean merged with the subjectivism of the Skeptic into the neo-Platonic transcendent *Absolute*, in whom the highest being might lose itself and thus experience the *summum bonum*.[1] The Skeptic influence is also found in the later Stoics. It is seen in Seneca and in Marcus Aurelius where the earlier Stoic *self-confidence* has a tendency to recede before a *self-despair*. This allows the individual to move through the loss of self-reliance to the religious spirit that loses itself only to find itself in God. Yet with all this negation in his view of the universe the Skeptic did not find himself deterred from a conventional acceptance of popular mythology—rightly interpreted—and an adherence to the popular forms of religious practice. According to Cicero, in practical life the Skeptic was even willing to allow that external goods came from the gods and that the right use of these by the individual constituted the chief good.[2]

A species of religious world-view that appears in early Semitic thought along the Tigris-Euphrates Valley very markedly affected all speculation of the Mediterranean world. This view accepted the idea of a dualism, with the heavenly bodies as the mediating agencies between the deity and man. It held to an invariability of sidereal

[1] Caird, *op. cit.*, II, 172.

[2] Cicero *op. cit.*, iii. 26.

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revolutions, which could, none the less, be modified by the exceptional operation of the will of the deity. Such phenomena as comets and falling stars readily lent color to this doctrine. The eternity of the universe was held as a resultant of the theory that the stars moved in invariable cycles of years.[1] The principle of life, warming and animating the body of man, was held to be of the same essence as the fires of heaven. By patient contemplation and study of the heavenly bodies and their motions the faithful received from them the revelation of all knowledge, past, present, and future.

Although the spirit of the Greek religion was fundamentally opposed to the deification of distant potencies, such as the celestial bodies, the different world-views of the various philosophical schools show patently the influence of astrological speculation. As East and West commingle in Hellenistic thought, deity throughout becomes less chthonic and more astral. The gods ascend from the hearth and the home and even from the heights of Olympus to take their places in the celestial regions far above the earth. Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle all called the stars visible gods. Chrysippus said that the heavenly bodies, being of purest ether, must be divine. For him the stars possess highest intelligence and move voluntarily of their own consciousness and divinity.[2] The ideas of fate, or the inescapable relation between cause and effect, and the interdependence of the heavens and the earth in connection with human events, so widespread among the Stoics and represented indeed in all Hellenistic thought, had their earliest exponents in the Babylonian plains. The influence of this type of thinking is seen in the neo-Pythagoreanism of the time of early Christianity, with its doctrines of the eternity of the universe, the influence of the stars upon the sublunary world, the belief in airy demons who torture mankind, and the symbolism of numbers with their mystic power.[3] Aurelian, in 274 A.D., officially recognized astral theology by having a splendid temple built to Sol Invictus, and placing therein images of Bel and Helios which had been imported from Palmyra. The emperor Julian, who opposed early Christianity so violently, called the sun his "king-star" and made himself the champion of the cult, going so far as to consider himself the spiritual son of Sol Invictus.[4] For him as for all who embraced sidereal

[1] Cumont, *Astrology and Religion among the Greeks and Romans*, p. 24.

[2] Cicero *op. cit.* ii. 7–31.

[3] Cumont, *op. cit.*, p. 87.

[4] While allowing himself especial prominence as the offspring of Helios, Julian claims a like paternity for humanity at large. *οὐκ ἀτιμάζω δὲ ταύτην, ἧς ἠξιώθην αὐτὸς παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦδε μερίδος; ἐν τῷ κρατοῦντι καὶ βασιλεύοντι τῆς γῆς γένει τοῖς κατ' ἐμαυτὸν χρόνοις γενόμενος, ἀλλ' ἥγοῦμαι, εἴπερ χρὴ πείθεσθαι τοῖς σοφοῖς, ἁπάντων ἀνθρώπων εἶναι τοῦτον κοινὸν πατέρα.*—Julian *Oration* iv. 131 C.

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theology the sun regulated the harmonious movements of the planets, unified the entire universe, had intelligence, and produced the appearance upon the earth of the souls of men.

While the influence of astral speculation moved westward permeating the philosophy of the Greeks and Romans, a strong tide of thought set eastward from around the Aegean and stirred Oriental thinking. The flotsam and jetsam of this tide drifted into different reaches of Eastern reflection and furnished useful material for the earnest minds of the time. The literature of the Jewish people in the vicinity of Alexandria, such as the Book of Wisdom, the writings of Philo Judaeus, the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, and IV Maccabees, all bear witness to the action of this tide from the West.

Philo adopts the theory of the universe and its beginnings from Plato's *Timaeus* and with religious assiduity distributes its various details throughout his interpretation of the Jewish sacred writ. By such an ingenious proceeding the creation stories of Genesis are brought up to date and made for the Alexandrian Jew really intelligible and satisfying. Hellenistic Logos ideas and earlier Jewish notions concerning Wisdom are woven by Philo into a doctrinal texture that for him embodies the best features of both. In pictorial language he declares that his world-view includes God, the Supreme Being, as the Father, the Logos as the Son, and the physical universe as the grandson.[1] At times the Logos takes the place of deity itself, and Philo displays the ditheism of the Gnostic. The *daemon* theory of Socrates reappears in Philo's belief that every man has a permanent divine Logos attached to his person. For him matter is eternally and essentially evil. The implications of this doctrine lead Philo, as also Wisdom and IV Maccabees, to deny the otherwise prominent Jewish notion of the resurrection of the body. For Philo the soul is pre-existent. Incorporeal souls inhabit the air. Purer souls belong to angelic beings, while the less pure drift earthward to unite with mortal bodies. This is platonic in its atmosphere. Wisdom disagrees here, for its writer holds that a child good by nature may have "a good soul fall to his lot." In Philo's opinion only a few of those souls who descend into mortal bodies are saved, and that by spiritual philosophy, "meditating, from beginning to end, on how to die to the life in the body in order to obtain incorporeal and immortal life in the presence of the uncreated and immortal God."[2] For Alexandrian Judaism the soul immediately after death enters on its final award, whether of bliss or of torment. Here it parts company very

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 154.

[2] Caird, *op. cit.*, II, 201.

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definitely with the earlier and Palestinian type which held to a sheol, with a resurrection and a final judgment for all followed by torment for the wicked and bliss for the righteous. For Philo the idea of the pre-existence of the soul interferes successfully with a rigid racial solidarity and thus the soul, at the dissolution of its prison-house, the body, does not need to be retarded by racial considerations from reaching its own particular consummation. R. H. Charles remarks upon the strangeness of his world-view, which portrays man in this present life as determined by his ethical conduct when a pre-existent soul, conceiving the pre-existent state to be ethical and capable of progress upward or downward, yet leaving the after-life, the post-corporeal existence of the soul, mechanically fixed for good or evil to all eternity.[1] Yet in Philo this doctrine is not consistently applied, for we at times find him placing in the present life the opportunity for man to make progress from the higher to the lower. To do this man must despise the flesh, regard sense-phenomena as unreal, and entirely abandon love of self. This progressive activity turns in the way of "reverence," and "love," and "loving knowledge," each phase bringing the individual nearer and nearer to the divine presence.[2] The element of attainment in Philo moves along with the idea of God as a self-revealing, transcendent deity, and of the universe and especially man as constituting a revelation of the divine. The notions of immanence and transcendence in the view of Philo are woven by him into a weird fabric which nevertheless to him, with his religious preconceptions inherited from Jewish ancestry and his cultural acquaintance with Hellenicism, appears eminently comfortable and satisfactory.

A syncretistic world-view embodying features of all those so far discussed and regnant throughout the Hellenistic life from which the Fourth Gospel emanated is that which was held by the Gnostics of the first century A.D. It is agreed today that one of the main interests of the Gospel is the recognition of early Christian Gnostic influence upon Christian tradition. A description of the pre-Christian Gnostic world-view will demonstrate the fluctuation of ideas about the deity, the universe, and man in the environment belonging to the appearance of the Fourth Gospel. The dualism of Plato and Aristotle, with matter as formless and unreal in distinction from the world of reality, gives way in Gnosticism before a dualism which represents two diverse and real worlds, both full of energetic activity—the world of good, the spirit, and the

[1] Charles, *Eschatology*, pp. 304–6.

[2] Bentwich, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

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world of evil, matter—each in conflict with the other. The early Persian dualism had two hostile worlds led by the evil Ahriman and the good Ormuzd in bitter strife which was ultimately to result in the victory of the latter. The Gnostic combined the higher and lower dualistic elements of the Hellenic world-view with the Persic idea of the two hostile worlds and thus arrived at the conclusion that matter was essentially and eternally evil, with escape from it to the higher world of the spirit as the chief aim of human life.[1]

Mythical figures, such as the "Great Mother" figuring in the Asian cults as the mother-goddess under such names as Astarte, Beltis, Atargatis, Cybele, and the "Primal Man," the Gayomart of the Persic stories, and the Son of Man in Jewish Apocalypticism, are introduced to assist man in his escape from the evil world.[2] There are seven angelic powers transformed from the seven Babylonian planetary deities or from the seven good spirits or "Angels" of Persism which control the lower spheres. It is the function of the gnosis to provide the one receiving it with intimate knowledge about the being, nature, and names of these seven in order that the soul may ascend through the lower realms guarded by them and at last reach the radiant realm of the supreme deity.[3] Practically the Gnostic world-view worked out in the creation of a cultus where the initiate underwent rites of purification from evil and accepted secret instruction for the safe journey to heaven. In conduct the idea concerning matter as inherently evil led on the one hand to the ascetic ignoring of natural functions, or on the other hand to indulgence in the satisfaction of appetites as being apart from, and lacking significance for, the welfare of the soul. It is in the assistance given to the initiate in obtaining salvation that the world-view of the early Gnostic links up very closely with the thought of primitive Christianity. The Christian writers were able to replace the many and the

[1] See W. Bousset, in *Enc. Brit.* (11th ed.), pp. 153–59. "Gnosticism has combined the two, the Greek opposition between spirit and matter, and the sharp Zoroastrian dualism, which, where the Greek mind conceived of a higher and a lower world, saw instead two hostile worlds standing out in contrast to each other like light and darkness. And out of the combination of these two dualisms arose the teaching of Gnosticism, with its thoroughgoing pessimism and fundamental asceticism."—*Op. cit.*, p. 154.

[2] Wendland, *op. cit.*, p. 176, holds that Gnostic religions marked a reaction against astral religion. The Gnostic religions were redemption-religions which furnished to man theurgic instruments by the use of which he might break the fatalistic bonds of siderealism. Cf. Case, "The Study of Early Christianity," in G. B. Smith, *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, p. 312.

[3] Case, *Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 327–28.

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mythical salvation-procuring agents of Gnosticism with the one and the historical person of Jesus. Later Gnostics welcomed this fact and built up their own world-views about it and their own interpretations as to the nature and the function of the historical figure. In due recognition of such Gnostic thought the Fourth Gospel is put forward. The varying interpretations of the same personage in Gnostic speculation has its counterpart within the Christian group and is due in both instances to the change of world-view. This phenomenon will be discussed in detail at the close of the present investigation.

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CHAPTER II

THE JOHANNINE UNIVERSE: ITS ORIGIN, STRUCTURE, AND DESTINY

It is to be expected that in the Fourth Gospel the practical religious purpose, dominating as it does the entire structure, would express itself in language and thought-forms amenable to the popular mind of the age and locality to which it brought a message. In this the Gospel is of a piece with the rest of the New Testament literature.[1] These writings spring from active participation in the life of the time rather than from continuous and profound reflection upon the ultimate issues of human existence. In appealing to the people in the various communities verging upon the Levant the Christian evangel took for its vehicle the modes of expression then operative in these groups. It is not a matter of surprise, therefore, to find widely disparate elements within the collection of New Testament writings or even within the limits of a single book, such as the Fourth Gospel.

In the synoptic productions there is the idea of the Divine Being similar to the Φιλάνθρωπος, the lover of man, of the Book of Wisdom, the one who makes beneficent provision both for the just and the unjust.[2] Coupled closely with this is the radically different notion of a divine being who can sweep Sodom and Gomorrah with all their hapless folk into a terrible conflagration and, worse still, who can calmly prepare eternal fire with which to torture the wretched souls of his own creating.[3] In the letters of Paul is found the statement that judgment comes after the cessation of physical activity, with the inference that the earthly life provides the only opportunity of so acting as to avert the coming wrath and win eternal happiness. On the other hand Peter allows for repentance—preaching to those who have passed beyond the confines of this life, making Christ the bearer of the message.[4] In the first three Gospels the soul and the spirit of man are practically synonymous. The soul of man survives the decease of the body and goes to either the blest or the unblest section of Hades, the intermediate abode of the departed

[1] Deissman, *Light from the Ancient East*, pp. 238–46.

[2] Wisdom 1:6; 7:23, 25; Matt. 5:45; Luke 6:35.

[3] Matt. 11:23, 24; 13:41, 42, 50; Luke 16:23, 24; 17:19.

[4] Rom. 2:5–10; I Pet. 4:19.

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spirits.[1] In Paul the soul is the vital principle of all flesh (σάρξ)[2] and is never conceived by him as the bearer of a higher spiritual life. It is the spirit (πνεῦμα), renewed, recreated, which makes man spiritual (πνευματικός), and which, with the death of the body, departs "to be forever with the Lord." The apostle Paul could describe the imminent new age and its inception in such graphic language as that in his first letter to the converts to Christianity at Thessalonica: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we that are alive, that are left, shall together with them be caught up in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we be ever with the Lord." In the Synoptic Gospels these pictures of an imminent cataclysmic world-end and world-renewal are very frequent. Yet along with these are put forward suggestions that link up very closely with the Gospel of a new order which slowly and gradually develops out of the work inaugurated by the first Christian group.

Similar phenomena are met in an examination of the set of ideas functioning in the Fourth Gospel. The rich variety investing popular parlance would appear to be reflected in the many meanings for κόσμος throughout the book. The use of this word to denote the "world-order" or "universe," terms entirely alien to the Jewish mind[3] as such while common property of the Greeks from Pythagoras down to the later Stoics,[4] finds some place here.[5] Another meaning for it is the "earth," this occurring rarely.[6] Many times "cosmos" is applied to the human race.[7] The flexibility of this term renders it able to describe a large group of people,[8] or to suggest what in modern nomenclature is called "the public."[9] The prevailing function of the word "cosmos"

[1] Mark 9:47; Matt. 5:22, 29 f.; 10:28; Luke 12:5; 16:23; cf. I Enoch 22 (Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, II, 202).

[2] Full discussion by E. D. Burton, *American Journal of Theology*, July, 1916.

[3] The LXX of the Old Testament has the word, but only in its earlier meaning of "adornment," or as a rendering of צְבָא "host," (Gen. 4:1; Deut. 4:19, etc.): while אֶרֶץ and תֵּבֵל are there translated by γῆ and οἰκουμένη. In Wisdom and II Maccabees it frequently occurs as a name for the material universe. Stanton, *HBD*, IV, p. 938.

[4] Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 170, notes; cf. Plutarch *De plac. philos.* iii. 1.

[5] John 17:5, 24.

[6] John 11:9; 21:25.

[7] John 1:10, 29; 3:16 f.; 6:33, 51; 8:26; 12:47; 13:1; 14:31; 16:28; 17:6, 21, 23.

[8] John 12:19. [9] John 7:4; 18:20.

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in the Fourth Gospel, while cognate with those so far listed, moves out from these into the realm of religious speculation which dominates the entire message. It is in this connection that the bias of the writer appears. The cosmos signifies for him as a Christian preacher mainly the universe built up of ideas or personal attitudes visited vainly by the revelation of the Logos so miraculously exhibited in the person of Jesus.[1]

Although the various connotations of the word "cosmos" in the Fourth Gospel show the freedom with which the term comes into play, as also the danger of giving loose rein to a theory attached to its function,[2] there exist throughout the book references suggesting a general view of the universe, its origin, structure, and destiny. The cosmos in this sense had a definite beginning, as the introductory passage shows. The same event is hinted at in the description of the "father" of evil as a manslayer "from the beginning." In the argument of the erstwhile blind man the expression ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος seems to indicate the earliest stage of the present world-order, although in agreement with a common New Testament use of ὁ αἰών it may merely express duration of time.[3] The termination of the universe plays a minor part in the message of the book. A last day appears rarely and then only in close connection with material reflecting Jewish[4] or Jewish-Christian[5] ideas. Even this the author overlays with a mystical representation utterly devoid of temporal or somatic significance.[6] The Logos appears in the prologue as the agent through whose activity the whole world comes into being. The atmosphere of such Jewish creation stories as are recorded in the Old Testament is absent from this representation.[7] In the Wisdom of Solomon and in Philo[8] the divine being employs Wisdom or Logos in creative operations, but maintains a more or less predominant place throughout. The author of the Wisdom of Solomon is able to see in Wisdom the "artificer of all things," and a like function is accorded the

[1] John 1:11; 7:7; 14:22–24; 15:18–25; 16:8, 20; 17:14–18.

[2] Westcott avers that the Attic notion of "order" in the word "cosmos" colors thoroughly its appearance in the Fourth Gospel (Westcott, *St. John*, I, 64). Stanton as against this states that the world as viewed by the New Testament writers generally is a realm, not of order, but of grave disorder (*HBD*, IV, 939).

[3] John 1:1; 8:44; 9:32. Cf. E. D. Burton, Lecture notes, unpublished.

[4] John 5:21; 11:24.

[5] John 5:25, 28; 6:39.

[6] John 8:51; 5:24.

[7] The J and E narratives in Gen. chaps. 1 and 2.

[8] Wisdom 1:14; 6:7; 9:1; 9:9; cf. 8:4, 5; 7:22. Philo *Laws* iii. 73.

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Logos by the Fourth Gospel. In the prologue at least the divine being is only remotely related to the world enterprise. It is the Logos as the creator, the bearer of "life" and "light," that commands the author's attention.

The language in this part of the book betrays the genetic sources from which the author derived his creational concepts. Writing a half-century prior to the appearance of the Fourth Gospel a representative of later Stoicism discusses the beginnings of the universe in a style closely allied to that of the evangelist.[1] In a similar inquiry Aristotle had outlined four causes of the world's existence, namely, efficient, material, modal, and final. In the last analysis the creator embodies for Aristotle the efficient, modal, and final causes in his own nature, leaving the material cause or "substance" (ὕλη) as matter inherently capable of receiving the form imposed upon it by the creator. In criticism of this view Seneca argues that the multiplicity or duality of causes introduced by the Stagirite do not form a series of independent causes, but are all variations of a single cause which can be called "the maker."[2] The first cause of the earlier philosophy, upon which both Plato and Aristotle had been in virtual agreement, and the Logos of Heraclitean ancestry are in this later Stoicism identified and, as such, minister to first-century creation theories such as that in the Fourth Gospel.[3] These formed the common property of thinkers in Hellenistic circles and must have been familiar to those who first received the message of the evangelist. Expressions like ζωή, φῶς, and μονογενής[4] figure frequently in those representations which embody features familiar both to the Hellenistic philosopher and to the unlettered, rustic initiate of a mystery religion. In the religious societies (*thiasi* or *orgeones*), to whose life the Orphic hymns ministered in pre-Christian times, the descriptive epithets μουνογένεια[5] and φοσφόρος are applied to Persephone, the female appear-

[1] Seneca *Ep.* 65. 4–6, 11, 12.

[2] See Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 60, 162, for discussion.

[3] The Aristotelian "matter" is repudiated by the Stoics, and in its place is postulated "body" (*corpus*) which does not have the passivity of "matter," but is of the same essential stuff as the first cause, or the creator. "cui tanta vis est, ut impellat et cogat et retineat et iubeat, corpus est."—Sen. *Ep.* 106. 9. Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 157, note.

[4] John 1:4 ff., 14.

[5] "The epithet cannot imply that she (Persephone) was his (Zeus's) only daughter, as he had other daughters among the Homeric gods, such as Athena and Aphrodite, but rather that she was 'unique,' or one of a kind. The mistaking of the word Μονογενής for μονογέννητος by Jewish and Christian writers has led to much confusion."—Legge. *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity*, I, 124, note.

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ance of the bisexual Dionysos to whom these pre-Christian Gnostics attributed the creation of the universe. The Jewish writers of this period are fond of using similar terms. The Apocalyptists equate "life" with "light" and "darkness" with "death," giving them the religious significance which attaches to their appearance in the Fourth Gospel.[1] These are favorite categories in the Synoptic Gospels, where "light" is constantly set over against "darkness" in a religious sense.[2] In the Pauline letters is found a like usage.[3] The early Christian teaching with respect to the "two ways" which came into such prominence in extra New Testament literature produced by the leaders of that time embody elements exhibiting this tradition.[4] The Johannine representation is of the same texture as all this Hellenistic creation material. In it the categories of "light" and "darkness," "life" and "death," "truth" and "error," assume a place perhaps more prominent than is granted to them in any other section of early Christian literature.[5]

The statement has been made that in the doctrine of beginnings according to the Fourth Gospel the earlier Jewish predominance of the "Father" as the one creative being tends to recede before the activity of the Logos. The first movement of this is seen in Philo, IV Maccabees, and the Wisdom of Solomon.[6] Within the New Testament the tendency shows itself plainly. In the Pauline letters of the earlier period God is the First Cause, from whom all things come and to whom all things ultimately return.[7] In the Apocalypse of John, God occupies the entire stage in the creation of the universe. In the letter to the Colossians the "Son" is included in the category of things created. He is *πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*.[8] Although he is not identified with God,[9] as in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel, there is the same dominant function accorded

[1] Secrets of Enoch 30:15; cf. 7:1; 8:8; 10:2; Apoc. of Baruch (Syriac) 18:1–12; IV Ezra 7:48, 126.

[2] Matt. 4:16; 5:14–16; 6:22, 23; Luke 2:32; 16:8; Mark 9:3.

[3] I Cor. 4:5; II Cor. 4:4–6; I Thess. 5:5–8; Rom. 13:12, *et al.*

[4] *Ὁδοὶ δύο εἰσί, μία τῆς ζωῆς καὶ μία τοῦ θανάτου, διαφορὰ δὲ πολλὴ μεταξὺ τῶν δύο ὁδῶν.*—Didache 1:1. *Ὁδοὶ δύο εἰσὶν διδαχῆς καὶ ἐξουσίας, ἥ τε τοῦ φωτὸς καὶ ἡ τοῦ σκότους. διαφορὰ δὲ πολλὴ τῶν δύο ὁδῶν.*—Epistle of Barnabas 18:1 *b*.

[5] John 1:4, 7–9; 3:10–21; 5:35; 8:12; 9:5; 11:9; 12:35 ff.

[6] In extra-Palestinian Judaism the Logos idea was "a modification of intuitive and naïve monotheism."—Bentwich, *op. cit.*, p. 145.

[7] I Cor. 8:1; Eph. 3:9.

[8] Col. 1:15, 16.

[9] Stated baldly, the Logos is declared to be of "God-stuff."

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him in the creating of the world. In Hebrews the "Son" is the one "through whom" God "made the worlds," and by whose power "all things are upheld," but,[1] unlike the thought of Colossians, it is God the Father "for whom are all things and through whom are all things."[2] Here too the language of the Genesis narratives and of the later Jewish creation stories is brought into the description of the creative act, the worlds being "framed by the spoken word of God."[3] Jewish-Christian theories of the place of Jesus in a pre-worldly divine economy on the one hand and Stoic creational teachings on the other mark the path by which the Christianity represented by the Fourth Gospel arrived at its view of the beginnings of the universe. Paul refers to "Christ Jesus" as having in his existence prior to the earthly life a place on equal terms with God, and as appearing in the world of men in the guise of a "wisdom from God."[4] The evangelist unites the "Christ Jesus" of the Christian tradition to which Paul had access with the then widespread Logos theories of the Stoics, and is able to state emphatically that the Logos was in the beginning of the same nature as God, creating the universe, and at last issued in unique plenitude in "Jesus Christ." The "Father-God" of the Jew assumes the function of the Stoic "world-soul"[5] and Jesus Christ, the Logos-filled person, commands the entire attention as the one medium through which all things came into being.[6] That such is the true character of the Johannine cosmic theories is evident from the attitude of the Christian writers succeeding the first Hellenistic propagandists of the new religion. They regarded the Stoic Logos doctrine as anticipatory of Christian teaching, and Justin was persuaded that all Logos believers were intrinsically adherents of Christianity.[7]

The structure of the universe reflected in the Fourth Gospel is described in popular language and falls into three sections, "things above," things existent upon the earth and within temporal limitations, and "things below." The "Spirit" descends from *heaven* at the baptism of Jesus.[8] Nathanael is promised a sight of *heaven* opened and "the

[1] Heb. 1:2, 3, 10.

[2] Heb. 2:10.

[3] Heb. 11:3, *ῥήματι θεοῦ*.

[4] Phil. 2:6; I Cor. 1:30.

[5] John 6:44; cf. Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 218, 219, 240.

[6] John 1:3, 9, 10, 14, 18.

[7] *οἱ μετὰ λόγου βιώσαντες χριστιανοί εἰσι κἂν ἄθεοι ἐνομίσθησαν.*—Justin Martyr *Apol.* i. 46; cf. Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 432, note; cf. pp. 149 ff.

[8] John 1:32.

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angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."[1] The author has Jesus assure Nicodemus that "no man has ascended to *heaven* but he that came down from *heaven*."[2] At the conclusion of this episode, in material closely resembling editorial comment, the phrases "from heaven" and "from above" are given identical meaning.[3] In answer to the prayer of Jesus on the day of the entry into Jerusalem a voice came from *heaven*. This was explained by some bystanders as thunder, by others as the utterance of an angel, but by the author of the Gospel as the voice of God.[4] In the record of the last extended conversation which Jesus had with his close followers the popular representation of "things above" stands out unmistakably. Jesus is reported as saying that there are many dwelling-places in the house of "the Father," and that in leaving the earth his object is to see that one of these is set apart for each of his disciples.[5] This higher realm in its relation to the lower and earthly region exercises supreme authority, for the author sees in the representative of the most powerful political organization a mere instrument in the carrying out of purposes initiated above in the heavenly counsels.[6] The close of the earthly ministry of Jesus is explained sufficiently for the author in the statement that he has ascended to assume a permanent place in the higher realm with God, the "Father."[7] According to the world-view of the Fourth Gospel it is this higher sphere—far above all limitations of space and time, remote from evil earthly associations, and dominating all things else, which for a time expressed itself completely in the person and work of "Jesus Christ," whose life was Logos-filled—to whose eternal and divine economy became united all who received a like influx of the Logos through belief in the miraculous endowment of the Man of Nazareth.[8]

Beneath the upper heavenly territory of the Johannine universe stretches the lower earthly sphere. This material world with all its inhabitants is the result of the primal creative activity. It is understood as resting on definite foundations.[9] From the beginning, according to the author, the Logos, unperceived by mankind, permeated the world. Only when it issued in striking individual quantity and quality in the person of Jesus did recognition come. Even then such recognition was far from universal.[10] As the light of the sun to the physical

[1] John 1:51.
[2] John 3:13.
[3] John 3:31.
[4] John 12:28.
[5] John 14:2.
[6] John 19:11.
[7] John 20:17.
[8] John 1:18; 3:3, 6, 31–36; 5:24; 6:54, *et al.*
[9] John 17:24.
[10] John 1:4–12.

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universe, so was the entrance of the Logos in the earthly work of Jesus among men.[1] The purpose of his coming was to "save the world."[2] He left the earthly existence in order that the Logos might enjoy a wider sweep in the spreading of the disciples with their new message.[3] With the history of the limited success of this message behind him and in acute awareness of bitter enmity toward it, especially on the part of the Jews, the writer of the Fourth Gospel acknowledges that the "salvation" brought by Jesus has not reached and commanded universal attention and allegiance. This carries him out into a view of the present order as ephemeral, corrupt, and hostile to divine activity with which he identifies all who oppose the preaching of Jesus as the bearer of the new life. This classification obliterates all others. Although through the Jewish race came the Logos,[4] members of that race refusing the claims of Jesus remain lost in the world-darkness.[5] Blood brothers of Jesus occupy this sphere of hostility because they do not "believe in him."[6] The disciples learn that they are to be hated by "the world" even as had been their Master.[7] It is in this connection that Christians are denied the evil nature which joins those who are non-Christians by choice with the present temporal order. The disciples are not to be removed from the world, but to be protected from the malign influence which it exercises upon its inhabitants.[8] So real even within the sphere of the temporal and physical does this universe of unbelief become for the writer that he can speak of Jesus as having severed himself from, and having overcome, its presence and its power even prior to his casting off the earthly body.[9] This operation of the Logos is to be even more successful through the work of the disciples in telling of its appearance in the life of their Lord.[10]

In spite of this gleam of hope in the wider and more efficient activity of the Logos, or the "spirit," in the lives of the scattered disciples the thought of the Johannine writer concerning the earth and its occupants is shrouded for the most part in deepest gloom. The phrase "this world" implies darkness and defeat and death for all who belong to it, namely, all who deny the Logos doctrine embodied in the author's view of Jesus' career.[11] What Paul classifies as "sarcical"[12] and attached to

[1] John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46.
[2] John 12:47.
[3] John 14:12.
[4] John 4:22.
[5] John 12:35, 36.
[6] John 7:8.
[7] John 15:18; 17:14.
[8] John 17:7, 12.
[9] John 17:11 ff.
[10] John 14:12.
[11] John 3:16–19, 36.
[12] I Cor. 10:3.

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this "age"[1] this writer puts in the category of "things in the world" or in "this world," giving to the term a moral significance rare in the other Gospels, but found more frequently in the Pauline letters.[2] According to the Fourth Gospel the paramount interest of Jesus and his followers is to impart a new gnosis, possessing power to release humanity from the obsession of present temporal conditions even while remaining in contact with them. This imparted knowledge will save all who receive and utilize it from the destruction attendant upon those whose life is dominated by the sphere of temporal affairs.[3]

If the upper and heavenly, as over against the lower and earthly, areas appear clearly in the ethical world-view of the evangelist, no less so stands out the sphere of the subterrene. From above descend "light," "truth," and "life." From below rise "darkness," "error" and "death."[4] Direct reference to the three distinct areas is made where Jesus is recorded as saying to the hostile Pharisees, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world."[5] In the same discourse those who are deaf to the new message learn that they are of their "father, the devil."[6] The "Father of love" inhabits the higher realm, dispatching his messengers to earth in order that humanity may know a life of spiritual unity with him through his all-pervasive Logos, or "spirit of truth." The "Father of hate" inhabits the lower realm, sending his messengers to lead men into a life apart from unity with God through his all-pervasive spirit of error.[7] So potent is the influence of the latter in his malignant activity that he wears a title signifying domination over the affairs of "this world."[8] In the view of the Johannine writer there is a constant clashing of forces between the spirit of the overworld and the spirit of the underworld. In this conflict there can be no truce. It is evident to the author that the sinister sway of the subterrene spirit extends over the entire structure of the earthly interuniverse, darkening the minds of men everywhere, arousing opposition on every side to the beneficent enterprises of a loving God, and overshadowing human life on all sides with a pessimistic

[1] Rom. 12:2; I Cor. 1:20; 2:6; 8:3, 18; II Cor. 4:4; Gal. 1:4.

[2] Only in Matt. 5:14; 13:38; 18:7; 26:13; Rom. 3:19; I Cor. 1:21, *et al.*

[3] John 8:23 ff.; 14:23 ff.; 16:13 ff.; 17:8 ff.

[4] John 1:5; 3:19; 5:24–26; 6:50–58; 8:12 ff.; 9:39.

[5] John 8:23.

[6] John 8:44.

[7] John 15:18, 19.

[8] *ὁ ἄρχων τοῦ κόσμου*; John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11.

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antisocial gloom.[1] Yet in the historical moment represented by the life and work of Jesus the forces of light and truth win such a victory that for his followers hope is born. Jesus can hearten them with the *sursum corda:* "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." The struggle still continues. The temporal existence remains under the control of the lower evil spirit. A battle is won by the heaven-sent Logos-equipped champion, but the war continues with unabated energy, victory coming only to those who in accepting the Logos doctrine as taught by his followers receive on their part a similar Logos armature.

The triple division of the universe in the Fourth Gospel is the common property of the Hellenistic peoples to which the book brought its appeal.[2] The crude imagery of many of their world-pictures fails to find a place in its Christian philosophy, yet the underlying tripartite implications remain unchanged. For the Hebrews, cosmological speculation moved forward out of the mythology of the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. The popular Semite myths tell how Marduk, the chieftain of the gods, after long and doubtful battle marshaled the sevenfold wind and conquered Tiamat, the raging spirit of the abyss. This done, he split up the fallen foe, making a covering for heaven to hold up the waters of the sky and a covering for earth to restrain the waters of the great abyss.[3] In Hebrew mythology as reflected in the Old Testament are found the same elements. The firmament is extended throughout the spaces of the upper air and rests upon pillars.[4] Above it the waters are held up by the clouds.[5] This firmament is provided with windows (or doors) by means of which the rain is allowed to descend upon the earth.[6] Beneath the sky and over the sea or abyss is stretched the earth as a place of habitation for man and other living creatures.[7] Below the earth is the abyss,

[1] John 1:5; 3:19 ff.; 12:35 ff. In the Johannine letters generally ascribed to the author of the Fourth Gospel, the pessimistic note respecting the present order of things is struck even more sharply (I John 2:11, 15–17; 3:14 ff.; 5:19).

[2] In the Paris Magical Papyrus of 300 A.D. and in Attic magical texts of the third and fourth century B.C. reference is made to "binding" a human being "in fellowship with" Hecate, or the Erinyes, or Hermes, who are said to be "below the earth." This shows the wide sweep in popular usage of subterrene malignity (cf. A. Deissman, *op. cit.*, pp. 254, 305, 307).

[3] "Enuma Eliš."—A. Deimel (trans. by C. W. King, *Tablets of Creation*, IV, 42 ff.). See also *Cuneiform Parallels to Old Testament*, R. W. Rogers.

[4] Job 26:11; 37:18. [5] Job. 26:8.

[6] Gen. 7:11; II Kings 7:2, 19; Ps. 78:23; Mal. 3:10.

[7] Gen. 7:11; 49:25; Deut. 33:13; Pss. 42:7; 78:15.

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wherein monsters still exist to threaten the safety of mankind. These only God can hold in subjection.[1]

In the Mediterranean world of early Christianity similar myths still obtained. The popular mind conceived the earth as set between the upper and the lower spheres with man in the central plane, the constant recipient of influences benignant from above and malignant from below. On the part of Jewish thinkers there is a tendency to speculate upon the upper region and divide it into various sections, each with its characteristic features and inhabitants, some of which latter entertain evil designs toward man. The seven heavens of the first-century Secrets of Enoch and the earlier Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs are witnesses to this movement.[2] In the Letter to the Ephesians is found a world-view suggesting the threefold division with which is included a plurality of heavens. There Christ is declared to have "descended into the lower parts of the earth" and afterward to have "ascended far above all the heavens."[3] In this letter also the leader of evil spirits is called "the prince of the power of the air," and the hosts under his control are "world-rulers of this darkness" whose dwelling is in the "heavenly" regions.[4] Certainly Paul knew of a third heaven, and when alluding to this in the Corinthian letter he uses language that links the conception with the "Paradise" located in the third heaven by the writers of II Enoch and the Assumption of Moses.[5] The "tree of life" in the paradise sketched by the writer of the New Testament Apocalypse is exactly paralleled in the Enoch Apocalypse,[6] while the "river of life" which the writer of Revelation saw "proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb in the midst of the street thereof" is divided by the Enoch author into its four streams mentioned in the Eden picture of the Genesis cosmogony.[7] Indeed the New Testament Apocalyptist himself can also speak of the "fountains of waters of life" toward which "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne" shall lead those "that came out of the great tribulation."[8]

[1] Isa. 27:1; Job. 26:13.

[2] R. H. Charles, *Apoc. and Pseud.*, pp. 282–367, 425–569.

[3] Eph. 4:9, 10.

[4] Eph. 6:12.

[5] II Cor. 12:4. See also H. St. J. Thackeray, *Relation of St. Paul to Contemporary Jewish Thought*, p. 173.

[6] Rev. 2:7; 22:1, 2; II Enoch 8:3.

[7] Rev. 22:1, 2; II Enoch 9:2; Gen. 2:10 ff.

[8] Rev. 7:14–17.

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Paul is very definite with respect to the control of the present order by the forces of evil, and their leader is a dark and terrible reality in all his thinking. He is the "god of this world" who blinds men to the light of the gospel.[1] He sets snares for the unwary in sexual relations. Paul appears to go so far as to regard procreative activities and race perpetuation as a special province of Satanic ordering to be avoided as far as possible by those who had received the "Christ-spirit."[2] The apostle himself confesses to being harassed by an "angel of Satan."[3] Yet for Paul as for the writer of the Fourth Gospel the outlook, gloomy as it is for man in the present "evil age," is made tolerable to all who through the influx of the divine spirit of Christ receive power to resist the influence of the lower world and the promise of final victory over Satan and his satellites.

Although Seneca and the later Stoics, unlike the New Testament writers and the Jewish Apocalyptists, give no place in the world-view to a malignant spirit of the underworld opposing the spirit of God in the life of man upon the earthly plane, behind their thinking lies the philosophical presupposition of the plane of human life situated between the lower darkness and the upper light. With their own early poet Cleanthes they can assert that evil comes from the heart of man apart from exterior influence. With their first philosophers they can see a single substance throughout all the universe. Yet in spite of this they can have the deity creating the cosmos out of chaos, and Seneca can write of the whole frame of nature as in danger of being swallowed up in the "dark abyss."[4] He calls philosophy the "art of divine contemplation," for it "surmounts that darkness which we are wrapped up in, and carries us up to the fountain of light itself."[5] In the thought of the later Stoicism represented in Seneca it is nevertheless the dualistic world-view of mind and matter, inheritance of Platonic speculation, which occurs most frequently. In striving for guidance in the practical affairs of life the monistic hypothesis is not brought into the forefront. Seneca is a debtor to the successors of Plato when he declares that "matter is dull and passive, impotent of itself, and moulded at pleasure by the dominant and ever-active mind."[6] Where Paul and the Johannine writer regard the present life as overcast by evil shadows, with the "Christ-spirit" or the "Jesus-Logos" as the only medium by which these shadows may be dispelled, Seneca sees evil only in the attitude of

[1] II Cor. 4:4.
[2] I Cor. 7:1, 29, 40.
[3] II Cor. 12:7.
[4] Seneca *Dial.* 11. 1, 2; *Benefits* 8.
[5] Seneca *Ep.* 28.
[6] Seneca *Ep.* 26.

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the individual toward life, and the power in man himself of overcoming this and living serenely in accordance with nature. The philosophic attitude of "divine contemplation" will make the mind of man "at peace with itself." If the "soul is taken up with divine thoughts it is in heaven even while it is in the flesh."[1]

In the cosmogony utilized by Gnostic contemporaries of the Johannine author the temporal and earthly plane is called the "lower" world. The plurality of heavens so prominent in the Jewish Apocalyptists and hinted at in the New Testament writings plays a conspicuous part in the world-scheme of Gnosticism. Matter, viewed by the later Stoics as nondescript and passive, is held by the Gnostics to be active and malevolent. The material world and the material body are intrinsically evil and the creation of evil spirits. The generative process commended by the Stoics and condemned by Paul becomes utterly abhorrent to many of the Gnostics.[2] The main object of man is to rid his soul of material and fleshly entanglements in order that it may win its way through the hostile ranks of the various aërial and heavenly spheres to the ultimate goal, the abode of light from whence the soul originally fell. As in the Fourth Gospel it is the true gnosis which opens the way.

With the destiny of the universe the Fourth Gospel has little concern. One form of the messianic hope within the Jewish group from which the first Christians derived their cosmical theories attached itself tenaciously to the thought of a near-by consummation of the present age, a renovation of the existing world-order, and a coming of the Messiah upon the clouds to rule over his own people in a new heaven and a new earth. Paul, at the commencement of his apostolic activity at least, exultingly shared in this view.[3] He could portray the return of Jesus as the Messiah in terms of the most materialistic Jewish type. The features exhibited in his treatment of the messianic hope conform closely to those at the forefront of the national quietism of the Pharisee party. It is true that here the messianic kingdom includes both Jews and Gentiles who have received the "spirit of Christ." Yet elsewhere in the epistles of his early ministry Paul gives token of believing firmly that the Jewish race could look forward to enjoying the premier place in the coming new régime. Further than this "all Israel" is to be saved from the destruction of the present order.[4] Not that the messianic

[1] Seneca *Ep.* 18; *Ben.* 9.

[2] Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 426; cf. Case in *A Guide to Study of Christian Religion*, pp. 307, 310, 311; cf. Legge, *op. cit.*, I, 153, on the Essenes.

[3] I Thess. 4:13–18. [4] Rom. 11:1 f., 12, 26.

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age is to be of the same character as the order which it has succeeded. Paul distinctly states his conviction that when "the trumpet shall sound at the last day" it will presage the utter disappearance of all things material. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God."[1] His scorn of the physical, with the activities incident to its continuance, set alongside of his keen anticipation of an imminent cataclysmic end to the present scheme of things, carries him at times to the verge of frenzy. Such seems to be the atmosphere surrounding his strenuous and notable appeal to the Corinthian Christians: "But this I say, brethren, the time is shortened, that henceforth both those that have wives may be as though they had none; and those that weep as though they wept not; and those that buy as though they possessed not; and those that use the world as not using it to the full: for the fashion of this world passeth away."[2] In the later New Testament letters Paul's expectancy respecting the near end of the world is not so compelling. He writes of his own death and sees in it an escape from the "evil age" into a "far better" existence "with Christ."[3] It may be too that a change in Paul's eschatology created a different attitude toward earthly and physical considerations. In the letter to the Ephesians the position outlined with respect to the marriage relation marks a wide remove from that of Paul in I Corinthians.[4]

The opinions of Paul respecting marriage in the letter to the Corinthians strike a note common among the Cynic-Stoics, who in the very nature of things moved in the same sphere of popular religious propagandism as did the leaders of early Christianity in its appeal to the Hellenistic world. Epictetus is a champion of celibacy and expresses himself in language very similar to that of Paul.[5] On the other hand, Seneca and Musonius Rufus treat marriage and family life in the same

[1] I Cor. 15:50.

[2] I Cor. 7:26, 29–31.

[3] Phil. 1:23.

[4] Eph. 5:22–33.

[5] "In the present state of things, which is like that of an army placed in battle order, is it not fit that the cynic should without any distraction be employed only on the ministration of God? To say nothing of other things, a father must have a heating apparatus for the baby; wool for his wife when she is delivered, oil, a bed, a cup; and so the furniture of the house is increased. Where then now is that king who devotes himself to the public interests . . . . ? Consider what we are bringing the cynic down to, how we are taking his royalty from him!"—Epict. *Disc.* iii. 22. 69–75; cf. Arnold, *op. cit.*, p. 368; cit.

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dignified fashion as does the writer of the Ephesian letter.[1] In writing of his wife Seneca sets aside his Stoic restraint and permits himself the use of most affectionate terms. He also describes the "wise and good man" as one "who does not so much consider the pleasure of his life as the need that the world has of him; and who does not weary of this life so long as he is able to serve his wife or his friends." Musonius in opposing the celibate ideal of Epictetus declares that marriage was no hindrance to Pythagoras, Socrates, or Crates, the princes of philosophy, and that since marriage is natural philosophers should set the example of it.[2]

In the later writings of the New Testament, such as Hebrews and the catholic epistles, a like attitude is found.[3] In the letter called II Peter the Stoic world-end by fire is contemplated. The heavens and the earth are "stored up for fire," and in the "day of the Lord" the "heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall be dissolved with fervent heat, and the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up."[4] In the Corinthian letters Paul teaches the Stoic eschatology. For him the day (the last day of judgment) is to be "revealed in fire."[5] The difference between Paul and II Peter is that while the former feels that the end of the age is imminent—perilously so for many of the Corinthian schismatics—the latter is earnestly seeking to explain to people of Paul's earlier persuasion the tardiness of the "day's" appearing. In this the writer of II Peter is nearer Stoic eschatology than is Paul, although both agree as to the manner of the consummation.

In the Fourth Gospel the same extended view of the future as regards the present world is found. There is no eager waiting for the end of the material universe and the ushering in of a new era. The relationships that belong to the earthly plane do not evoke the author's commendation or his censure. He does not evidence contempt for the physical as such. For him the Logos could dwell in real flesh.[6] The human parentage of his hero appears to detract in no whit from the reality of that hero's kinship with God the Father. Illustrative material containing immemorial tradition among Jewish women concerning childbirth is made use of in evident approval of race perpetuation.[7] For

[1] Seneca *Ep.* 4. 25, 105.
[2] Stobaeus iv. 22. 20; cf. Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 368 ff.
[3] Heb. 13:4; I Pet. 3:1–8.
[4] II Pet. 3:6–13.
[5] I Cor. 3:13–15.
[6] John 1:14; 19:34; 20:24–29.
[7] John 16:21.

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the Johannine writer the values of life do not depend upon a cessation of the present order. He does not need to look forward to a last day with the resurrection of the physical body as did the Jewish Pharisees, or of a glorified body as did Paul. The destiny of the universe in the material sense is so far off as to be neglible in the preaching of his gospel. The destiny of mankind is not associated with a coming cataclysmic world-end.

There are three instances of eschatological reference in the Johannine writings. These will bear quotation. In the first Jesus is represented as saying to the Jews in Jerusalem, "Marvel not at this: for the hour cometh in which all that are in the tombs shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto the resurrection of judgment."[1] In the second, the "bread of life" discourse, Jesus declares, "This is the will of him that sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. For this is the will of my Father, that everyone that beholdeth the Son, and believeth on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."[2] In the account of the raising of Lazarus, Martha gives utterance to the popular Jewish resurrection hope: "Martha saith unto him, I know that he [her brother] shall rise again on the last day." In all three instances these Jewish eschatological views occur in conjunction with material that deprives them of future significance. In the first, the reader is advised that those who believe on Jesus as the divine messenger have "eternal life" and will not come into judgment, but have passed "from death unto life." "The hour now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." In the second, Jesus is put forward as the "living bread which came down from heaven that a man may eat thereof and not die," and it is argued that eternal life is wrapped up in the words of Jesus, which if received aright "are spirit and life."[3] In the third, the author has Jesus expressly combat the Jewish idea of the physical resurrection at the last day: "Jesus saith unto her [Martha], I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth on me though he die, yet shall he live: and he that liveth and believeth on me shall never die."[4] In the thought of the Johannine writer the Jewish elements appear, only to be overcast by the spiritual teaching of the context. A prominent New

[1] John 5:28, 29.
[2] John 6:39, 40.
[3] John 6:50, 63.
[4] John 11:25.

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Testament scholar in commenting upon the foregoing passages writes as follows:

> It is impossible to reconcile such utterances with the view of judgment which we must regard as the distinctive Johannine view. They serve only to remind us that John, with all his originality of thought, was still partly bound to the past. Along with his own conception he strove to make room for the belief that had impressed itself on the Church at large, of which he was a member. In this instance . . . . he found elements in the current theology which were not wholly tractable to his method of reinterpretation, and instead of discarding them he simply incorporated them as they were. Their presence must be acknowledged, but it need not confuse us in our estimate of his own characteristic thought.[1]

The second coming of Jesus, which was so closely connected by the early Christians with the last day and the general judgment, does not figure in the Fourth Gospel at all. The reference to it in the twenty-first chapter is generally conceded to belong to the hand of an editor rather than that of the compiler and author of the main book. The dominant thesis of the Johannine treatment makes the second coming of Jesus a work of supererogation entirely. For the early Christian eternal life was to begin in the new dispensation. For the Fourth Gospel eternal life begins in the present for all who believe in Jesus. As Schmiedel writes:

> It was generally expected by the early Christians that Jesus' second coming from heaven would be the signal for a bodily resurrection and for the judgment to be held before the throne of God upon all mankind; and that eternal life would then begin. In John, on the other hand, the judgment takes place during life, when a distinction is drawn between men, and the one section turns toward Jesus, the light which streams upon the world, while the other turns away from him (3: 19–21). This very moment marks the beginning of eternal life for such as believe in him or acknowledge God and Jesus; and it is a life which can never be interrupted by a resurrection of the body.[2]

Thus in the Fourth Gospel is perceived a view of the future from which imminent cataclysmic elements are on the verge of disappearance. In this the author provided a method that has been adopted by leaders of thought throughout the Christian movement.[3]

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel; Its Purpose and Theology*, pp. 216, 217.

[2] P. W. Schmiedel, *The Johannine Writings*, p. 254.

[3] In his *Philosophy of Religion*, Höffding writes thus concerning the attitude of Augustine: "The primitive conceptions of the second coming and the last judgment are now relegated to a distant and twilight background where they appear like blue mountains on a distant horizon" (p. 369).

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The Johannine ideas with regard to the universe have now been brought under review. Its triple character has been noted. Its origin and its destiny and their interest or lack of interest for the author have been discussed. His world-view also exhibits the thought entertained by him respecting man in his relation to the universe. How does man make himself at home in the world? How does he overcome the conditions of the temporal existence? What is the correct attitude, in the writer's opinion, for man to assume toward the world? These and similar matters will be dealt with in the following chapter.

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CHAPTER III

MAN AND THE UNIVERSE IN THE JOHANNINE WORLD-VIEW

An examination of the world-view functioning in the thought of the Johannine writer reveals the fact that for him man is an occupant of the inter-world with good and evil influences playing upon him from above and below the earthly order. The author is not seriously concerned with the purpose of the universe and its relation to man. In common with the ancient Hebrew the Stoic felt that man was the center of providential purpose. The chief end of "nature" in the Stoic view was the wise and good man, the "citizen of the universe." The later Hellenistic writers, affected by Oriental astral speculation, turned aside occasionally from admiration of human possibilities to appreciate the beauty of the physical universe. Seneca looks back with envy to the *saeculum aureum*, when in the silence of the night men took their ease stretched out upon mother-earth and gazed enraptured at the myriad glories of the star-lit skies.[1] The religious literature of the Jewish people is replete with admiring recognition of natural phenomena, while ever ready to view man as the being to whose sustenance and delight all created existences are set to minister. The *locus classicus*, in which both attitudes appear, is a religious hymn that has left its mark upon many minds in the course of Christian history.[2] The opinion of Jewish Apocalyptists writing at the same time as the Johannine author was that "by no means was man made on account of the world, but the world on account of man."[3]

In the teaching of the Fourth Gospel all such suggestion fails of a place. The introduction of natural phenomena occurs, only to have their significance for man immediately displaced by the main mystic doctrine imparted by the author. The stirring of the evening breeze with its mystery of whence and whither speaks to him only of the entrance of

[1] Seneca *Ep.* 90. 42.

[2] "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that thou visitest him? For thou hast made him but little lower than God, and crownedst him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over all the works of thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet."—Ps. 8:3–6; cf. Pss. 96, 97, 107, 147, 148.

[3] II Baruch 14:8; cf. 8:44.

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the Logos or "spirit" into the life of man.[1] A refreshing draught of water from the cool, dark depths of Jacob's well is ignored even by the tired and thirsty traveler while he discourses to the Samaritan woman of "the living water springing up into eternal life."[2] Those who follow Jesus because of the "loaves and fishes" are admonished to "work not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which abideth unto eternal life."[3] The gift of God's sunshine with its blessings for man is forgotten in the presence of Jesus, the "light of the world," following whom man "shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."[4]

In the Fourth Gospel racial or political considerations play little or no part whatever. For earlier religious writers this has been a serious problem. First-century Jewish authors concurred heartily in the ancient national notion that God had created the world and all it contained in strict view of their own racial continuance and welfare.[5] Others of their contemporaries claimed this distinction only for the "righteous" in the nation.[6] This developing exclusiveness on the part of a section of the Jewish race, along with its unswerving fidelity to the Torah, is a well-known feature of early Christian times.[7] It has already been noted that in spite of the gentile parish of Paul and along with his universal tendencies there is the adherence to a view of the paramount place of "Israel" in the world-prospect of the Christian apostle.[8] In early extra-canonical literary productions of Christianity this national exclusiveness is taken over and transformed into ecclesiastical rigor under the dominance of which all things are said to be created for the especial glory of the "church."[9] It is only just to the author of the "Shepherd" to recognize the wider tendency in his world-view, a tendency traceable in the later Old Testament prophets and prominent in the literature of early Christianity.[10]

Interests of this kind do not occupy the attention of the Johannine author. The Jewish race claims his notice only because the historical

[1] John 3:8.

[2] John 4:14.

[3] John 6:27.

[4] John 3:12.

[5] Assumption of Moses 1:12; IV Ezra 6:55, 59; 7:11.

[6] II Baruch 14:19; 15:7; 21:24.

[7] "Interrogé sur le moment où il convenait d'enseigner aux enfants la sagesse grecque, un savant rabbin avait répondu: 'A l'heure qui n'est ni le jour ni la nuit puisqu'il est écrit de la Loi:—Tu l'étudieras jour et nuit'."—E. Renan, *Vie de Jesus*.

[8] P. 29 of this thesis.

[9] Shepherd Vis. 1:1, 6; 2:4; 4:5.

[10] Justin Martyr *op. cit.* i.10; cf. Charles, *Apoc. and Pseud*, II, 415.

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associations of his religion derive from the Jews and because protagonists of Judaism menace the origin and perpetuation of that religion.[1] Roman authority is perforce referred to in the account of the death of Christianity's founder.[2] Hints of the spread of the new religion among the Samaritans and the Greek-speaking Jews are not so much evidences of the author's struggle with a problem of universalizing a national cult as the precipitate of early Christian history introduced by him into his own presentation of the teachings necessary to the propagation of the Christian religion in his own day.[3]

The practical interest of the Johannine writer turns in an altogether different direction from that of physical need or mundane comfort or racial predilection. His attitude is dominantly mystical, and in order that his position may stand out more clearly it may be well to discuss briefly mysticism in its general aspects. A present-day exponent of functional psychology defines the mystic as "one who accepts the existence or reality of God as it is understood by his time and social milieu without question and concentrates all the energy of his being upon the attainment of communion with God."[4] The philosophic aspect of mysticism appears when the human mind essays to deal with the divine essence or ultimate reality of things. It is the "conviction of direct and immediate communication, independent of any sensuous perception, with intelligence not bound by the conditions of the sensible universe."[5] On its religious side mysticism is the endeavor of the human being to enjoy the blessedness of actual communion with highest being, with God. Edward Caird describes this kind of mysticism as "religion in its most concentrated form." "It is," he writes, "that attitude of mind in which all other relations are swallowed up in the relation of the soul to God." In the discussion of man and the universe the Johannine writer displays mysticism in both the philosophic and the religious aspects, the latter occupying for him the wider field of interest.

The author of the Fourth Gospel is obsessed with the unreality, the transitoriness, and the evil character of the environment in which he has found himself. This is native to all mystic speculation. The present

[1] John 7:1 f.

[2] John 18:29 f.; 19:1 f.

[3] John 4:4 f.; 7:35; 12:20 f.

[4] Edward Scribner Ames, *American Journal of Theology*, April, 1915.

[5] Sir Frederick Pollock, *Hibbert Journal*, October, 1913.

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world is ever a means to an end rather than an end in itself. Life's activities have significance only in relation to an "inner" unseen life. The world of common experiences loses its color and its attraction for the mystic.[1] He is a stranger in a strange land, and the traveling is through a wilderness of dust and darkness. The various sense-phenomena of his earthly experience become but types or symbols by means of which the mind discerns the eternal reality and the life of the mystic merges into the life of deity itself. The vital things are the eternal and the invisible. He views all history *sub specie aeternitatis* and ignores local and temporal partitions. The primary and absolute nature of the unseen and eternal, the secondary and relative character of the visible and temporal, these are the fundamental and directive presuppositions of the true mystic.

Although the mystic holds it possible in this present existence to know God, he does not admit that this knowledge is an ordinary cognitive phenomenon. It is, in his opinion, unique in itself and achieved through no process of perception, reasoning, or scientific experiment. These methods involve effort and at best lead to provisional and relative conclusions. They are necessarily held in leash by the premises first laid down, and moreover they point beyond immediate results to still newer problems. If the mystic employs such methods he does so only to "scorn the base degrees by which he did ascend." The paramount purpose for him is to move beyond the relative and partial and "arrive at the blessed goal" of the absolute. In the acquisition of the knowledge of God he is anxious to eliminate as far as possible activity requiring direct effort. Dionysius the Areopagite overcame this difficulty by positing a *via negativa* in which he "left behind all things both in the sensible and in the intelligible worlds and entered into the darkness of ignorance, or rather an excess of light that is truly mystical." Leading back from this ineffable light Dionysius had a *via affirmativa* bringing him through abstraction and analysis to God.[2] This writer constantly calls for a cultivation of passionless passivity through which the soul may

[1] "Is it any wonder that a Bernard of Clairvaux should traverse the passes of the Alps surrounded by scenes of the most marvellous beauty and grandeur without uttering a single word that would indicate that these things made any lasting impression on his mind? For his eye was turned inward to contemplate those vaster scenes, of which the grandest natural scenery could be only a sensuous reflection, in which he stood nearer to the ultimate Sublime and Beautiful in the presence of which all things of sense shrank away abashed."—G. Cross, *Biblical World* (February, 1917), p. 97.

[2] W. R. Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 108, 114. W. M. Scott, *Aspects of Christian Mysticism*, p. 45.

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realize the divine. A similar attitude is evinced by the leader of a school of mysticism profoundly affecting Christian thinkers of the fifth century and onward.[1] Plotinus places a low estimate upon the historical process and upon human relations. Social and civic duties as well as intellectual activities must be superseded by the isolated detachment of the soul in metaphysical union with the One. He refers to the mystic attitude in this way:

> He will not behold this light, who attempts to ascend to the vision of the supreme while he is drawn downwards by those things which are an impediment to the vision. He will likewise not ascend by himself alone, but will be accompanied by that which will divulse him from the One, or rather he will not be himself collected into a one. . . . . He, therefore, who has not yet arrived thither, but either on account of the above-mentioned obstacle is deprived of this vision, or through the want of reason which may conduct him to it, and impart faith respecting it; such a one may consider himself as the cause of his disappointment through these impediments, and should endeavour by separating himself from all things to be alone.[2]

In trying to bridge the chasm between man and the world, between subject and object, Plotinus finally transfers reality altogether to an inner life of the spirit, living which, man loses all sense of social values in divine communion.[3] So remote from ordinary human experience does this mystic ecstasy become that for the followers of Plotinus it is all but unattainable in the earthly existence. The first great disciple of Plotinus records four such experiences of his master, but only one for himself, even at the age of sixty-eight and after long years of endeavor.[4]

Writers in the field of psychology have attempted to investigate the mystic mind and to discover, on the basis of his own introspection, some traces of the journey through which he comes to his own. Delacroix finds three stages in the development of the mystic life.[5] In the first the mystic has attained to the desired union with God and is entirely wrapped up in the strange new elevation of life-interests created by this experience of his. The second stage is called in mystic phrase "the dark night of the soul." In this clouds gather to obscure the vision of God and obstacles intervene to prevent continued union with the divine.

[1] Plotinus (205–279) A.D.

[2] Plotinus *Ennead* vi. 9. 4.

[3] R. Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 104.

[4] T. Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, p. 101.

[5] H. Delacroix, *Etudes de l'histoire et de psychologie du mysticisme*, p. 415. See discussion in M. B. Dawkins, *Mysticism an Epistemological Problem*, pp. 12 ff.

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The last stage is characterized by "serene and powerful activity" where the mystic enjoys continued communion and at the same time appreciates and makes use of life's ethical values. From the same point of view Boutroux is able to distinguish five different stages of the mystical way: (1) a semi-unconscious grip upon the God-idea, the desire period; (2) the coming of the idea into clear consciousness and the ascetic purifying of the soul to bring it into likeness to the idea; (3) the full realization of union, the ecstasy period; (4) the reshaping of the individual's concepts and ethical ideals in conformity with the mystical knowledge so far acquired; and (5) the full and permanent development of the life and thought when the mystic in knowing and loving God also knows and loves the entire creation.[1]

Such considerations as these in connection with mysticism as a distinguishable phenomenon of human life will serve to introduce the atmosphere necessary to a correct view of the Fourth Gospel. The emphasis of mysticism in any and all of its forms is upon immediate awareness of God, upon a direct and intimate fellowship with the divine. The tendency of mysticism is to neglect natural phenomena, human affairs, and social considerations. The urge of the mystic results in a revaluation of all life from the point of view of his new and satisfying intimacy with spiritual potencies. All these features come plainly to the forefront in the Johannine literature. Man "overcomes the world" by entering into divine fellowship. The existence and reality of God are never questioned. Over against the evil order is a spiritual order in which God is ever regnant. The religious experience of the author has given him a place in the spiritual order through right knowledge of God. This has ushered him into a freedom that breaks the bonds of sin, disturbs the control of an evil world, and brings a tranquillity untroubled by earthly vicissitude, untouched even by the terrors of death.[2] For the Johannine writer "the whole world" is under the dominance of evil.[3] It is in a state of "darkness" or "death." Yet those who have the true knowledge of God are passed "from death unto life" and possess a "peace" and a "joy" that is complete. Their fellowship is not with the dark and dying world, but with the eternal, ever-present God.[4] This knowledge of God with its concomitant soul-serenity does not depend upon the future course of events. It is not a promised possession stored up in another world. It is a present blessing to be achieved and enjoyed by all who come in the right way. The

[1] E. M. M. Boutroux, *The Psychology of Mysticism*, pp. 183 ff.

[2] John 8:36. [3] I John 5:18. [4] John 14:28; 15:11; 16:24.

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epithet "eternal life" is applied to a state almost wholly dissevered from temporal and spatial relations. Man makes his escape from the world, not by the vestibule of death, in the physical sense, but by the path of knowledge which leads out of the death of error and darkness into the life of truth and light. The significance of the cosmic order is lost in the reality of the spiritual order. "Life eternal is to know the only true God." "He that believes has eternal life." God has given to believers "eternal life."[1]

A glance at Christian literature earlier than the Fourth Gospel will serve to show the development of the mystic world-view up to its all-pervading power in the Johannine writings. Scattered mystical utterances are found in the Synoptic Gospels. The "vision of God" is for the "pure in heart."[2] Intimate fellowship with the divine comes through such knowledge of God as Jesus reveals to his disciple.[3] After the confession of Peter concerning the messiahship of Jesus at Caesarea Philippi, Matthew's record introduces a clear mystic note in the saying, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."[4] Another such note is struck by the author of Matthew where he represents Jesus as affirming that where two or three are come together in his name there in the midst of them will be his presence.[5] Yet these are but slight and inconsequent mystic strains which do not affect the main movement of thought in the pre-Johannine Christian literature. In the non-Markan material common to Matthew and Luke, Jesus is the teacher uttering parables and aphorisms after the fashion of the Jewish rabbi. The bond between him and the believer is expressed in terms of current relations between the rabbi and his disciple. In Mark, Jesus is the ideal Christian receiving at baptism an outpouring of divine power similar to the spirit-manifestations exhibited by earlier Hebrew heroes and prophets. This spirit is expressed not so much in teaching his followers spiritual truths as in works of healing and exorcism which resembled, yet greatly excelled, the activities of the ordinary Hellenistic miracle worker or Jewish messianic claimant. Matthew and Luke follow Mark largely in this representation, although they introduce elements of a more mystical character.

[1] John 17:13; 3:36; I John 5:11. [2] Matt. 5:8.

[3] Matt. 11:25–27; Luke 10:21–24.

[4] Matt. 16:13–20; cf. Mark 8:27–30; Luke 9:18–21.

[5] Matt. 18:20.

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In all three of these earlier Christian writings the imminent fact of a coming spiritual régime dominates the entire message. The disciples are messianic emissaries heralding the approaching kingdom, preaching repentance and the new righteousness, and preparing men for the future. The emphasis everywhere is upon the active expression of the spirit through the Christian propaganda in order that the promised era may be the more speedily realized. There is no passive acceptance of the divine life and a beatific experience of super-worldy realities here and now. The message for man is that he must repent of sin, be baptized into spirit-endowment, live according to the dictates of the new righteousness, and seek followers for his master in earnest desire that by so doing the coming of the kingdom will be the more quickly brought to pass.

It is in the writings of Paul where Christian mysticism enters to dispute the field with the natural and non-mystic elements of the new religion. Here the idea of the divine in the human comes into play for the first time in early Christian literature. This mystic item Paul received from his Hellenistic environment. The conception of God dwelling in a human body did not arise in his Jewish thinking. It is common knowledge that such a notion did not live happily among the Jewish people. The history of the relations between the Jews and their Seleucid overlords indicates very distinctly the utter revolt of the Jewish mind against the thought of connecting a human being with deity or of identifying any man, howsoever exalted, with divinity.[1] Yet Paul, in spite of his Jewish antecedents, has enough Hellenism to express his idea of the Christian life in terms of divine and human interpenetration. "I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me" is a statement which is very comforting to him.[2] He reminds the Corinthian Christians that his preaching among them had been the proclamation of "the mystery of God." His message reveals "God's wisdom in a mystery," and to the one who receives this message are displayed "things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, and which entered not into the heart of man; whatsoever things God prepared for them that love him."[3] Paul's letters constantly bear witness to his having achieved the third stage of the mystic life described by Delacroix as that "of serene and potent activity." In the midst of all his mental and bodily vexations the great apostle enjoys continued communion with God "in Christ" and yet makes full use of life's ethical values in his teaching.[4]

[1] S. J. Case, *The Evolution of Early Christianity*, p. 211.

[2] Gal. 2:20. [3] I Cor. 2:7, 9.

[4] Gal. 5:13–26; II Cor. 4:7–11; 11:16–30; Rom., chaps. 12, 13.

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Paul was fond of talking as the mystics do of the illumination which came to him when he received his new message and became an exponent of Christianity. He assures the Galatians that he received his gospel, "not from man or from man's teaching, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ in him." This, he is anxious to assure them, has nothing to do with "flesh and blood," but is the result of the direct and immediate revelation in the "good pleasure of God."[1] The author of the Acts narrative quotes Paul to the effect that he was guided all through his career by a "heavenly vision" received at, and responsible for, its inception.[2] In writing to the Corinthians, Paul darkly hints of ecstasy, of seeing heavenly mysteries, and of hearing words too ineffable for the utterance of earthly lips.[3] The core of his teaching is that the believer is a "new creation in Christ Jesus."[4] For him Christ dwells in the disciple and the same spirit is operative in both. This is the language of real mysticism. At the same time it is evident that to Paul's way of thinking the new life is meager in comparison with the life to be enjoyed in the future kingdom. The present, however potent, is only a promise of the coming abundant life. He can endure the physical afflictions incident to life in the body by looking upward and onward to a "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." The "methodical elevation of the soul toward God," so frequently stressed in mysticism, becomes Paul's daily habit. He looks "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen," for to him "the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." Here also Paul gives evidence of treasuring a hope still wrapped with the cerements of Jewish bodily resurrection ideas. He desires to know the fellowship of Christ's suffering to the end that he may enter into the glory of the resurrection. His citizenship is heaven, a place whence Christ is to come to earth to transform Paul's earthly form, "the body of his humiliation," and to fashion it like unto the body of the glorified Christ.[5] The mystic use of symbols is seen in the apostle's teaching. His body of believers in Christ is the "wild olive" grafted into the "good olive tree" of true Judaism.[6] The metaphor of the body with its head and its several members occupies an important place in his view of the early Christian community.[7]

[1] Gal. 1:15–17.
[2] Acts 26:19.
[3] II Cor. 12:1–4.
[4] II Cor. 5:17.
[5] Phil. 3:11, 20.
[6] Rom. 11:17–24.
[7] I Cor. 12:12–27.

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In the Epistle to Hebrews the combination of the mystic and the prosaic, the rapturous and the stolid displayed in the writings of Paul is readily observable. The writer is engaged in the task of making the Christian rubrics more amenable to the conservative Jewish mind. He suffuses the cherished traditions of Judaism—the work of Moses, Sinai, the Torah, the Temple cultus, the angelology—with a mystic aura which reveals them as types and symbols of the "good things to come" in the Christian religion.[1] Indeed all the things of earth are but "copies of the things in the heavens."[2] Christ is the high priest in "a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands."[3] The heroes of the Hebrew nation, according to this interpretation, were possessed of the illumination which enabled them to see the "city whose builder and maker is God." Moses endured as seeing him who is invisible. The Christian is one who has entered into this spiritual order, who is aware of the "cloud of heavenly witnesses," who discerns clearly the heavenly realities of which earthly objects and historical events are only a faint adumbration.[4] Yet in Hebrews as in Paul the look is mainly a forward one. God is accessible in the present through Christ to those who have become "enlightened" and have "tasted of the heavenly gift."[5] The present, nevertheless, in comparison with the glorious future is tenuous and insufficient. Only after the resurrection and the final judgment, pictured with all the realism of Hebrew prophetism regarding the *Yom Yahweh* or of later Jewish Apocalypticism concerning the last things, can the believer be perfected in holiness.[6] As in Paul and the writers of the Synoptic Gospels, the relation of the Christian evangel to ordinary human existence with its moral implications suffers no obscurement in the treatment of Hebrews. Here as in the earlier Christian literature the ethical coloring is distinctly Jewish.[7]

Thus in these writings of the New Testament are seen elements mystical and non-mystical, the tendency being favorable to a recession of the severely ethical or grossly material before a growing super-ethicism which "is in the world yet not of the world."[8] Mysticism moves from its appearance in the sparsely scattered hints in the earlier

[1] Heb. 10:1; 9:11.

[2] Heb. 9:23; 8:5.

[3] Heb. 4:14; 5:5–10; 7:24–28; 8:1, 2; 9:11.

[4] Heb., chap. 11; 12:1, 2.

[5] Heb. 6:4.

[6] Heb. 6:2, 8; 9:27; 10:26–31, 35–39; 12:25–29.

[7] Heb. 13:1–6.

[8] E. F. Scott, in "The Hellenistic Mysticism of the Fourth Gospel," *American Journal of Theology*, July, 1916, derives perhaps more ethical significance from the discourses than the author intended to convey.

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representations to its complete subjugation of all other elements in the Fourth Gospel. The aggressive preparedness of the disciple for a coming order so prominent in the Synoptic Gospels and in Paul disappears, and in its place is found a passive acceptance and enjoyment of a present spiritual order already replete with the "abundant life." Messianic expectations grounded in racial or political or even religious arrangement of human events yield place to a plane of satisfaction created by a revelation already completed and entirely independent of the course of human history and the racial demarcations incident to life upon the earth. The sordid details which a rugged Jewish morality did not hesitate to discuss gradually become less conspicuous and at last in the Johannine writings fail to gain any attention whatever. The reinterpretation of the Christian evangel is carried out by the writer upon such a level of transcendence that no provenance is afforded matters so inevitably connected with ordinary earthly activity. Christian mysticism comes here to full fruition.

It has been seen that the religious experience lying behind the production of the Fourth Gospel is understood only in the light of its mystic affiliations. Escape from the evil world comes through enlightenment which furnishes fellowship with God. The author overcomes the world by mystic knowledge. Communion with God makes the believer free and happy in this present life. It is in the search for the author's method of maintaining this communion that evidence of his Hellenistic associations comes to view. Here the writer attempts—at times with but indifferent success—to knit together threads of thought and life in his environment. His conceptual world contains elements of Eastern and Western thinking which the author uses without caring so much about their antecedent congruity as about their present efficacy in promoting what to him is the highest religious life.

The Johannine writer had before him a social product expressed in terms of personal faith in a historical figure, namely, Jesus, a Jew of the Palestinian type. He saw this faith lived out in the experience of people who probably had themselves felt the touch of Jesus' personal presence. In his own life a like faith had brought about a consciousness of victory over the evil forces so rife in his world-view. Also this writer had the Greek language as a vehicle of thought-expression, and along with this language the inheritance of ideas concerning the interpenetration of the human and the divine. To him the all-absorbing fact of religious life is that the pure divine element, the Logos, had come into man in the person of Jesus in astonishing measure. Knowledge that saves from the

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evil world is mediated through perception of the miraculous manifestation of God-life in humanity presented in the historical Jesus. Usages in the religious societies of his day likewise affected the author. Along with the recognition of the new Logos endowment through faith in Jesus is the physical act of baptism. There is a "sheepfold" with a door to it.[1] The doorway is the baptismal rite.[2] The believer must be born of water as well as of the spirit. This act of baptism is associated in some mystic way with the incoming of the Logos and its gift of "eternal life" for the recipient.

The sustaining of the mystic life is represented by the Johannine author as coming through a steady allegiance to the proposition that Jesus is the Son of God, with unique replenishment of the Logos element. Exterior assistance is rendered by partaking of a sacred meal. The inner result of this meal is continued communion with God; the outward expression is love for the Christian community. The author describes the sustenance of the mystic life in terms that approximate a grossly materialistic union of mankind with deity and in the same breath repudiates such a notion by explaining that after all it is the spirit that is of value. The "flesh and blood," or bread and wine, of the sacred meal are but material tokens of a mystical unity with God in Christ.[3] The Christian community is set forth in the symbolic language enfiguring the "vine and the branches."[4] Paul in his allegory of the body alludes to a like feature of early Christianity.[5] In both these writers the preeminence of Christ is unquestionably stressed, as is also the union of the believer with the Divine Father through the "Son." The gradations that appear in Paul's community are absent from that of the Johannine author.[6] For him there is no disparity in the gifts of the spirit and no degrees of efficiency in its operation among the *pneumatikoi*. All believers enjoy a common gift of eternal life and are bound in a common tie to each other and to God by the Logos element. The reference to the "beloved disciple" is the only hint, and this is a very vague one, of superior privileges in the Christian brotherhood as pictured by the author of the Fourth Gospel.[7]

The bringing together of Jewish and Hellenistic ideas in a sort of *mésalliance* is achieved by the author when he introduces witnesses to the authenticity of the Logos-revelation made through Jesus. As evidence

[1] John 10:1–3.
[2] John 3:5, 22–26.
[3] John 6:48–51, 53–58, 63.
[4] John 15:1–6.
[5] I Cor. 12:12–26.
[6] I Cor. 12:27–30.
[7] John 13:22; 20:2; 21:20, 21.

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for a bona fide theory of the Greek philosophers, features of early Christian tradition in widest remove from this theory and affected strongly by Jewish lineage are brought to the forefront with apparently no recognition of inherent, racial inappositeness.[1] Three main kinds of testimony to Jesus as the bearer of the Logos and the Logos message appear: (1) that of John the Baptist, who "came to bear witness of the light";[2] (2) that of the extraordinary power possessed by Jesus, displaying itself in knowledge of the thoughts of others, of things that lie outside the realm of ordinary individuals, of the mind of God, and in miraculous deeds, such as turning water into wine, feeding thousands with the contents of an ordinary scrip carried by a boy, walking on the waves of Lake Gennesaret, bringing sight to the blind, and even raising people from the dead;[3] and (3) that of the sacred writings of Judaism, so appealing to the Jews of the Dispersion.[4] The synoptic writers go a long way in their appeal to the Jewish sacred writ. The Johannine writer outpaces them completely. To the seeker after victory over the world these three forms of testimony to Jesus as the bearer of the secret are presented. The validity of this evidence is assumed to be unassailable. The necessity of accepting it as even more important than tactual acquaintance with the earthly Jesus is accentuated by the story of doubting Thomas. "Because thou hast seen, hast thou believed?" says the risen Jesus to this once skeptical disciple, after a demonstration of the risen body's reality, "blessed are they which have not seen and yet have believed."[5]

Such considerations as the foregoing serve to show the mystic use which the Johannine author made of material held in common with other Christian writers in his treatment of man and the universe.[6] It has been made patent that Hellenistic influences also entered largely into his re-working of the early traditions of the new religion. To be fully

[1] E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, p. 27. [2] John 1:8, 34.

[3] John 2:25; 2:20; 13:1; 17:25; 2:1–11; 6:1–14, 16–21; 9:1 ff.; 11:1 ff.

[4] John 5:30, 46; 12:38–40; 19:28. [5] John 20:29.

[6] "The mystic use of numbers found in the Gospel of Matthew comes into view in the Johannine choice and arrangement of material. John the Baptist three times is made to testify concerning Jesus. Three journeys are recorded of Jesus to Galilee, as also three to Jerusalem. The author takes account of three Passovers and three other Jewish feasts. Jesus is condemned three times and utters three sayings from the cross. The number seven, so common in Matthew, is also found. There are seven miracles and seven references to 'the hour.' The formula 'I am' occurs seven times. Jesus in the last discourse repeats seven times the phrase, 'These things have I spoken unto you.'"—E. F. Scott, *The Fourth Gospel*, pp. 21, 22.

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understood and appreciated the Fourth Gospel must be seen in the light of its non-Jewish as well as its Jewish heritage. The more clearly its affiliations with the thought and conduct of the peoples in the locality of Ephesus as they met their life-problems in the end of the first century are discerned, the better will the author's problem and his way of solving it be grasped by the student of Christian origins.

When the traveling Christian preacher, as the author of the Johannine literature would appear to have been, was carrying on his whole-souled propaganda as the exponent of a new religion, he met at every turn of the road the competition of the Cynic-Stoic enthusiast. This religious rival had a monistic world-view. His message was that all men were brothers of a like substance with deity. Man's body was the deity-substance, the Logos-element, in its coarser form. Man's intelligence was composed of the same substance in finer texture. God was this Logos in the most rarefied form. Each man had the capacity within himself, by refusing to be disturbed in the fluctuations of life's varying fortunes and by encouraging others to do likewise, of approaching nearer and nearer to that perfection found in God himself. In the main these preachers brought to their followers what has been called a religion of "attainment."[1] The emphasis which the Johannine writer placed upon the self-possession of Jesus, his independent volition, his self-contained power, his absolute authority in action, his superiority to the pressure of earthly events, may possibly have been due to the author's desire to present the founder of his religion to the best advantage among people whose ears had been attuned to the utterances of the Cynic-Stoic preacher.

In the same environment could be found that mysticism in the mystery religions which involved a dualistic world-view. The brotherhood of believers was a common factor in the life of the Roman Empire at the time of the appearance of the Fourth Gospel. The common life with the deity and with each other, the rite of baptism, and the sacred meal, phenomena frequently claimed as indigenous to the Christian religion or derived from Jewish antecedents, are now acknowledged as the common property of religious societies known all over the Mediterranean world. These mystery cults were powerful in molding and conserving the religious life of the Hellenistic peoples. Especially is this true of Asia Minor, the early home of the Johannine writer.[2] To this locality had come from the Far East the Babylonian "Ishtar and Tammuz,"

[1] S. J. Case, *The Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 279–83.

[2] Percy Gardner, *The Ephesian Gospel*.

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from the South the Egyptian "Isis and Serapis," from the nearer East the Syrian "Aphrodite and Adonis," the Phoenician "Astart and Eshmun," and the Cilician "Atargatis." From Greece across the Aegaean had come "Demeter and Dionysus." These various immigrant cults with their ritual and their mystagogues vied with the native cult of "Cybele and Attis" and with each other in striving to meet the religious needs of the people.[1]

The rite of baptism stands at the doorway of the mystic fold represented by these religious societies. It cannot be said the Fourth Gospel, along with the other Christian literature of the early period, is entirely dependent upon Jewish usages for the inclusion of baptism among the rites of the Christian confraternity. In earlier times in Greece, Demosthenes when engaged in a tirade against his rival Aeschines accused him of assisting his mother, a priestess of the Phrygian-cult deity Sabazius, when he "nightly gave the initiates the fawnskin and baptized them and purified them."[2] In later times Tertullian is very definite regarding baptism among the pagan cults. In his treatise on the subject of baptism he writes in the following strain:

> Washing is the channel through which they are initiated into some sacred rites—of some notorious Isis or Mithras. The gods themselves likewise they honor by washings. Moreover, by carrying water around, and sprinkling it, they everywhere expiate [purify] countryseats, houses, temples, and whole cities: at all events at the Apollinarian and Eleusinian games they are baptized; and they presume that the effect of their doing that is their regeneration and the remission of the penalties due to their perjuries.[3]

In a Mithra liturgy from a time not far from the issuance of the Fourth Gospel expressions occur which show the significance of this rite and which also depend upon identical imagery with that so common to readers of the Johannine literature. This will bear quotation in full:

> If it hath pleased you to grant me the birth to immortality that I, after the present distress which sore afflicts me, may gaze upon the immortal First Cause with the immortal Spirit and the immortal Water, that I through the spirit may be born again, and that in me purified by the sacred rite and delivered from guilt the Holy Spirit may live and move. Since this man born from a mortal womb is this day newly begotten by thee, since by the counsel of God,

[1] S. J. Case, *The Evolution of Early Christianity*, pp. 285–330.

[2] Demosthenes *De corona*. See F. Legge, *op. cit.*, I, 138, for citation and discussion of Orphic societies.

[3] *On Baptism* 5; *Anti-Nicene Fathers*, III, 671.

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marvellous in goodness, he, but one of many thousands, has been born to immortality, he aspires, he yearns, to adore thee with all the faculties that he, but a man, possesses. Hail to thee, Lord of Water, Founder of the Earth, Ruler of the Spirit! Born again, I expire, in that I am being exalted, and as I am exalted, I die; born with the birth that begets life I am delivered to death and go the way that thou hast instituted, as thou hast ordained and constituted the sacrament.[1]

In these cults contemporaneous with the beginnings of Christianity are also found devices calculated to induce an experience on the part of the initiate in which he finds himself in actual communion with the god. The sacred meal plays an important part in this connection. One of the few liturgical formulas from this period refers to a Phrygian ritual in which the neophyte exclaims, "I have eaten from the tambourine, I have drunk from the cymbal, I have become a mystic of Attis." Cumont in commenting upon this liturgy writes, "Through this meal the neophyte becomes a brother among brothers, having common unity with a saving deity. The religious bond of these *thiasoi* took the place of the natural relationship of the family, the gens, or the clan."[2] Similarly in the Fourth Gospel there is a sodality which transcends all ties of natural kinship. The initiate into this circle enters into a communion with the deity expressed in language readily understood by people acquainted with the mystery religions and their practices.

The open sesame into the Aladdin's cave where the mystery cults guarded their treasures of religious satisfaction is the secret word. The reason so little is known of the inner life of these societies is found in this fact. In the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, Lucius declares that he dare not recount his initiatory experiences and dismisses the subject in the words, "I have told you of things which, though you hear them, you cannot understand."[3] Similarly in the Fourth Gospel is found the "word" mysterious and baffling to the outsider, but replete with marvelous meaning to the one who has entered the charmed circle of Christ's followers. Jesus says to his disciples that his words are spirit and life. If the disciples continue in his word they are true followers. They shall know the truth and the truth shall make them free. They have become purified through the word which he has spoken to them. Those to whom this mystic knowledge has been revealed stand out in the Fourth Gospel as a select society possessed of esoteric religious treasures. The

[1] Otto Pfleiderer, *The Early Christian Conception of Christ*, p. 21.

[2] Franz Cumont, *Oriental Religions in the Roman Paganism.*

[3] Percy Gardner, *The Religious Experience of St. Paul*, p. 65.

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"Paraclete" is to interpret the meaning of the secret word to the members of the Christian group. All outside the mystic ring is under the dominion of Satan, and the uninitiated are in his power with eyes sealed to the glory of the new life in Christ. Entrance into the circle breaks the power of Satan, dissevers the bonds of "the world," and insures to the believer eternal life.

In the union with God and in the possession of blessed knowledge the believer in the Johannine sense and the initiate in the mystery cults enjoyed experiences which betokened, not only a victory over the present environment, but a future of continued blissful existence. The secret word brought a guaranty of happiness which physical death enhanced rather than destroyed. The statement has been made that the emphasis in the Fourth Gospel is more on the present than on the future. As regards its relation to the other writings of the New Testament with their use of contemporary messianic speculation this is undoubtedly true. Yet it must not be inferred that the present scheme of things incloses all the meaning of eternal life for the Johannine writer. His mysticism carries him to a far higher level. For him eternal life is a beatific state untouched by the "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," and death—the end of earthly existence—can mean only a closer union with the divine spirit. "The world passeth away and the lust thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." After like manner, in the desire for a blessed immortality, the devotee of the mystery cult sets earthly comfort and material welfare in the background of his life-interests. As surely as he enters into mystic union with the god, so surely will he with the god face a future of unending happiness. In many instances the seeker after this blessedness severed himself from all natural functioning in connection with the continuance of the race. Such startling facts of cult history serve to demonstrate the terrific earnestness with which the quest of eternal life was pursued. The provision for the present and continued well-being of the soul demands such a sacrifice that physical integrity and continuance are ignored or outraged. Nothing of so gross a character is found in the Johannine writings. Nevertheless it must be admitted that in their world-view it is always the spiritual life, the inner experience, the eternal aloofness from ordinary features of human activity that are stressed; so much indeed as to leave the physical in a very insignificant light. Not that the physical is made, as in the Orphic communities, the basis of evil and corruption. The writer makes himself plain enough on this point. It is not evil except as it is held in the clutch of the malign spirit.

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Yet it is only a shadow in comparison with the spiritual existence afforded by belief in Christ. Its needs, its significance, and its persistence are forgotten altogether in the rapt vision of eternal life in God.

Thus it has been shown that the problem of man and the world was approached by the author of the Fourth Gospel not merely through the inheritance of thought and life represented by the earlier records of Christianity. The language, the thought-forms, and the creative impulse which produced this literature belong in a very vital way to the wider reach of life in the Hellenistic world. His environment is at once the home and the product of Graeco-Roman civilization on the crest of the first century A.D. The widely scattered peoples of the Near East moved gradually into a unity of relationship with a world-empire under the rule, first of Persia, then of Greece, and finally of Rome. Under the mild imperial yoke the conquered races learned to think in terms which overreached tribal and national prejudices. For a couple of centuries or so the peoples clustered about the shores of the Mediterranean Sea mingled their races and religions, their manners and morals, in a crucible of Oriental symbolism, Greek philosophy, and Latin statecraft from which emerged through the medium of the Greek language that remarkable syncretism known to historical students as Hellenistic culture. From Asia Minor, the very center of this crucible, where the ancient Assyrian, Babylonian, Phoenician, Hebrew, and Egyptian cultures strove with their Greek and Roman younger rivals to express the religious life of the people, the Johannine writings came forth into the stream of the world's literature. To appreciate the success with which their author interpreted the Christian message in terms of contemporary philosophical thought and religious life the student of history has but to remember how large a place these writings quickly won in the early church. The salvation that was "of the Jews" had to be presented in a way highly normal in the life of the time in order to be appraised and accepted. If the Christian message had failed of an exponent who could express it in the thought- and life-currency of the syncretistic culture the Hellenistic world would willingly have ignored and speedily have forgotten it. The supreme achievement in this regard may be accredited to the Johannine writer.

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CHAPTER IV

NEW TESTAMENT WORLD-VIEWS AND THEIR INFLUENCE

In the foregoing chapters attention has been called to the importance of the world-view for a correct appreciation of the task accomplished so successfully by the Johannine writer. The reaching out after ways in which man may overcome the limitations of life in a temporal order, the assertion of mastery over the natural forces, the discovery of agencies whereby the world may in some measure be refashioned, the constant interaction of inherited and personal tendencies—these common phenomena have been observed in the various world-views which contributed directly or indirectly to the religious life of the Hellenistic peoples in the first century of Christendom. Man's view of the universe and his relation to it appear to contribute in an important manner to the expression of his personal faith. The differences in world-view lead to changes in the religious attitude. In order that such conclusions may stand out more clearly a study of one phase of the situation affecting the writers of early Christianity will now be made. To all who became vitally concerned in the first propaganda of the new religion, Jesus had achieved distinction as a Savior through whom real religious satisfaction could be adequately furnished. In this historical fact is found the *raison d'être* of the New Testament.[1] Yet a change of world-view created different representations of the work and worth of this historical personage even within the narrow compass of the Christian literary canon.

One of the earliest independent witnesses upon this question is the apostle Paul. To him Jesus was a heavenly being, enjoying in his preearthly existence equality with God himself. This being had forsaken heaven, lived an exemplary earthly life, and by his death on the cross abrogated the ritualistic aspects of the Jewish Torah.[2] For this he had received exaltation to a supreme place in the triune sphere of heaven, earth, and the lower regions. The actual earthly ministry of Jesus appears to Paul as an almost negligible interim between his heavenly existence and his death. Paul no doubt must have learned of the facts

[1] See S. J. Case, *The Historicity of Jesus*, and T. J. Thorburn, *The Mythical Interpretation of the Gospels*, for discussions.

[2] Phil. 2:6–11.

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of Jesus' life from the Palestinian disciples. That such facts did not come to narration in any definite form in the numerous writings of Paul must surely be significant.[1] The object of his interest and devotion is not the humble Jesus but the exalted Christ. This heavenly being is able to communicate his spirit to all who confess him as Lord and Savior. The outward marks of the reception of this spirit are displays of miracle-working,[2] and the fruits of the spirit-filled life are again and again expressed in values of a high ethical character.[3]

The inference is perhaps valid that had Paul received any definite data regarding the earthly ministry of Jesus he would have recorded of his Master similar miracle-activity to that which he had realized in his own personal experiences and looked for in the lives of his Christian contemporaries. That such an opinion was held in the early group known to Paul is evidenced by the tradition embodied in the Acts narrative.[4] If this came within Paul's purview its vitality for him was not strong enough to bespeak for it a place in the message of the apostle to the men of his time. His Gospel as given to the people at Corinth begins strikingly with the death of Jesus.[5] It is the risen and glorified Christ who demands his adoration and obedience. Paul's absorbing interest is in a heavenly Lord who produces wonder-working in the lives of his adherents and promises them victory over all demonic powers.[6] This superearthly being is also to visit the earth in the very near future, riding upon the clouds to fulfil the Jewish apocalyptic messianic expectations in the inauguration of a régime of true righteousness upon a renovated earth,[7] the Jewish Christians to constitute, as it were, an inner circle of highly privileged participants in the largesse of the Messiah-King.[8] Features of the supernatural personality and operation of a savior-deity such as obtained in connection with the worship of the "Lord Mithra" of the Persian, the "Lord Serapis" of the Egyptian, and the "Lord Augustus" of the Roman cults—familiar enough to the Hellenistic hearers and readers of Paul's messages—were blended by this early Christian preacher with elements of Jewish legalism and Messianism from which, as a product of the Hebrew race and religion, he did not find it either convenient or necessary to free himself.

A companion picture to that of Paul, and one which may be taken as dating from the same primitive period of Christian thought, is found

[1] Gal. 4:4.
[2] Gal. 3:5; I Cor. 12:4–11.
[3] Gal. 5:19–26; Rom. 12:3–21, *et al.*
[4] Acts 2:22.
[5] I Cor. 15:3–8.
[6] Gal. 1:4.
[7] I Thess. 4:13–18; II Thess. 2:2, *et al.*
[8] Rom. 11:24.

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in the source material used by the Gospel writers and designated by some New Testament scholars as "Q" or the "Logia." While in Paul and in the Acts tradition dynamic manifestations are held to be of highest importance—in the former on the part of Christians and in the latter on the part of Jesus himself—an investigation of these narratives leads to the conclusion that in the group of Jesus' followers to whose religious life these records ministered the emphasis was laid upon the prophetic rather than upon the dynamic aspects of Jesus' personality and work. In these sources miracle-working is conspicuous by its almost entire absence. The first appearance of Jesus discovers him returning "full of the spirit"[1] or "led by the spirit"[2] and proceeding into the wilderness. In the temptation following,[3] Jesus is represented as distinctly refusing to use miracle display in the prosecution of his enterprise. The style of address put into the mouth of the adversary "Satan" gives proof that to the group using this tradition Jesus could wear with acceptance such titles as "Son of God." Yet it is to be noted in this connection that the miraculous, as such, is eliminated from the functioning of that personality.

This neglect of the patently miraculous is characteristic throughout the entire range of these early sources. Dynamic manifestations of supernatural personality are everywhere either entirely absent or relegated to the shadowy background, while in the foreground of the picture stands Jesus as the incarnation of all that was highest and best in the prophetic tradition so dear to the truly religious Hebrew.[4] The miracle narrative of the centurion's servant turns aside for a brief moment from the otherwise purely Jewish cast of the document and addresses itself to gentile interests.[5] In the other remaining record of miracle-activity there is a close likeness to the tradition in Acts. Jesus casts out demons "by the finger of God."[6] Here and in Acts[7] it is God working through Jesus that accomplishes the wonder, and not the personality of Jesus functioning alone in a supernatural fashion. Also, according to Luke's source, the sons of those who criticized Jesus stood on the same footing with him in the realm of exorcism.[8] It must be inferred, therefore, that here at least no importance whatever can be attached to the miracle narrative as witnessing to the supernatural character of Jesus' worth and

[1] Luke 4:1. [2] Luke 4:1; Matt. 4:1.
[3] Matt. 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13.
[4] Matt. 11:7–19; Luke 7:24–35; Matt. 12:38–42; Luke 11:24–36.
[5] Matt. 8:5–13; Luke 7:1–10. [7] Acts 2:22.
[6] Luke 11:20. [8] Luke 11:19.

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work. It is the preaching of Jesus as the inheritor of the best Jewish traditions that gives token of his superior personality in these fragments of primitive Christian thought. Therein are displayed his prophetic credentials and the verity of his claims to leadership. That is the evident sign, ignored by the many, according to the synoptists,[1] but welcomed as the harbinger of a new day by those from whose hands have come these early records of Jesus' life and work.

Remarkable also in this early witness to the ministry of Jesus as conceived by the people of that day is the meager reference to his death. This fact and its import, so alluring to the religious reflection of the apostle Paul, have in these sources practically no place whatever. Only vague hints are found that can be associated with the passing of the Master.[2] These may merely refer to the kind of death any outstanding opponent of wrongdoing and wrong thinking may look for at the hands of those who have become wedded to their evil ways. In the woes pronounced upon the Jewish religionists there is a saying of similar pattern which bears out this interpretation.[3] In the latter portion of these sources there are eschatological teachings which portray the coming of "a Son of Man," "as the lightning comes from the East,"[4] or "as the coming of the deluge in the days of Noah."[5] From such sayings as these may be deduced a strong supposition, albeit no definite proof, that the supernatural personality of Jesus was expressed to these early Jewish Christians in terms of the then current apocalyptic Messianism. In this connection it may be of service to note that, according to the Q temptation narrative, the other kind of messianic hope, the national type so fiercely espoused by the Zealots, is utterly repudiated by the members of this group. The demands of this early community with respect to the character of Jesus appear to be satisfied by presenting him as the preacher of a new individual and social righteousness and the herald of a new kingdom soon to be established upon the earth with himself as the chief executive.

Another source apparently independent of the two that have just been considered and generally accepted as springing from the same early period in the development of Christian thought concerning the character of Jesus' ministry is that furnished by the Gospel bearing the name of Mark. The religious needs of the primitive Christian group, for which or by which this Gospel was evoked, created a representation

[1] Matt. 12:38–42; Luke 11:29–32.
[2] Matt. 10:38; Luke 14:27.
[3] Matt. 23:34–46; Luke 11:49–51.
[4] Matt. 24:26–27; Luke 17:23–24.
[5] Matt. 24:37–39; Luke 17:26–27.

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of Jesus as a dynamic personality of the first rank. According to Mark the supernatural equipment with which to carry on the work came to Jesus at his baptism by John straight from the sky as the "Holy Spirit" in the form of a dove and as a voice of deity evidencing to Jesus his divine sonship.[1] Mark does not in so many words state that Jesus won the victory over Satan in the wilderness encounter which followed. He leaves this to be inferred by reason of the fact that shortly afterward Jesus meets one of Satan's satellites who evidently has received a warning as to the superior power of the newcomer. At the meeting in the synagogue, according to the Markan statement, this malevolent spirit is ignominiously cast out of the man within whom he had been operative.[2] The extraordinary character of Jesus is also revealed in the record that he was with the wild animals in the wilderness and remained unhurt, receiving there the ministrations of angelic visitants.[3]

Throughout the Gospel of Mark the characteristic activity of his hero is that of miracle-working, especially in the realms of healing and exorcism. As is well known, there were other wonder-workers in the period from which this record takes its color, each with his own curative *modus operandi*. The significance of Jesus for Mark is not so much that wonders were wrought, but that these were of such a notable character. The efficiency with which Jesus worked set him as one far above the common crowd of miracle mongers.[4] All the manifestations of the Holy Spirit which Paul realized in his own Christian experience and eagerly expected in the experience of all who unquestioningly accepted his message concerning the lordship of Jesus are produced by the Gospel of Mark as an integral part of the Master's own mission while on the earth. Jesus is represented as sending forth disciples to carry on the work which he has inaugurated, "to preach, to have power to heal sickness, and to cast out demons."[5] Here are set forth the main features of Jesus' ministry according to the Markan picture. The connection of Jesus with any form of the zealotic messianic hope is in Mark, as in Q, distinctly disavowed, as instanced in the messianic ascription of Peter at Caesarea Philippi and its immediate correction by Jesus himself.[6]

The main body of opinion anent the person and worth of Jesus set forth in the Gospel of Mark may be summed up as follows: From his baptism Jesus gave indubitable evidence of possessing supernatural

[1] Mark 1:9–11.
[2] Mark 1:23–26.
[3] Mark 1:13.
[4] Mark 1:27, 28.
[5] Mark 3:14, 15.
[6] Mark 8:27–33.

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power.[1] This power came to expression in his unique control of evil forces—Satan, the demon-possessed—and of natural processes. Such extraordinary effectiveness in dealing with demonic powers denoted Jesus as representative of a new earthly régime. The ministry in Palestine was preliminary, opening the way for the coming completeness of the kingdom upon a miraculously renovated earth subsequent to a day of judgment for all people.[2] Jesus in the nature of things died in order to leave the earth, go to heaven, and there hold himself in readiness to come to earth again at the divinely appointed time. The supernatural significance of Jesus in this program of events was clear to him during his earthly life and also evident to the demons whose power he opposed and dispelled.[3] Jesus time and again endeavored to make this known to his intimate associates, but was unsuccessful owing to their astonishing obtuseness.[4] On the other hand Jesus guarded this knowledge from the Jews generally for fear that their non-apocalyptic Messianism might fix on him for its focus and thus spoil the apocalyptic program.[5] Jesus went willingly to his death that he might have his place in the future appearance from heaven of the complete messianic world-order.[6] The resurrection experiences of the close friends of Jesus fully revealed to them the real worth of their Master as the Messiah whose earthly supernatural activity had been preparatory—as also should be their own—to the establishment of a heavenly régime coming from above in a miraculous fashion to assume its sway upon the earth.[7]

In the sources that have been examined so far the early Christian conceptions with respect to the career of Jesus have been observed to undergo certain modifications due to the needs of different communities utilizing these writings, or to the particular interests of the narrator. In these modifications may be discovered a movement away from the presentation of Jesus as a strictly superearthly character because of his death and resurrection, to that which pictures his work on earth subsequent to the baptism episode as displaying a supernatural stamp. This earthly activity is in the Logia prevailingly Jewish in interest and outlook, and in the Gospel of Mark prevailingly Hellenistic, with Paul occupying a middle place between these two.

[1] Mark 1:13, 27.
[2] Mark 10:35–40; 13:24–27.
[3] Mark 1:24, 34; 3:11; 5:7.
[4] Mark 9:10, 31, 32.
[5] Mark 1:34; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26, 30; 9:9.
[6] Mark 9:31; 10:32–34; 13:26, 27; 13:28–32.
[7] Mark 14:61, 62; Mark 13:9, 10.

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Coming now to the Gospels bearing the names of Matthew and Luke it is at once remarked that the Jewish and Hellenistic phenomena of the earlier sources are taken over and harmonized. The presentation of the person and work of Jesus in both of these documents is substantially the same. To both the unique character of the Christian's Lord comes to view in teaching—or preaching—and in miracle-activity. In both, the traits which in the earlier writings mark the humanity of the subject are eliminated, and fresh, clear colors are introduced to portray him as supernatural, not merely from the baptism at the Jordan, but from a human-divine miscegenation. It is not enough for these Christian writers that their Master receive the Holy Spirit at the time of submitting to the rite performed by John the Baptist; he must appear as a distinct superearthly being even at his birth.[1] The importance of the divine voice at the baptism as marking out for Jesus his extraordinary prerogatives is considerably lessened or altogether neglected.[2] Matthew can furnish heavenly voices to Joseph and to the wise men.[3] Luke can tell of angel communications to the parents of John and Jesus and to the Bethlehem shepherds.[4] From such sources both writers are satisfied that the evidence points to the supernatural character of the babe and the singularity of the career upon which he emerges. Matthew and Luke include in their writings certain early traditions[5] showing an interest in tracing the genealogy of Jesus back through Hebrew connections to David and thence to Abraham—in the tradition copied by Luke reaching as far back as Adam, who is called "son of God." Such traditions appear to have risen from Palestinian interests, certainly from Jewish interest whether of Palestine or of the Diaspora, and originally belong to a period when the conception of the work of Jesus is still satisfied with his earthly parentage and in this case is somewhat concerned to retain elements appertaining to the Davidic national messianic hope, a hope so comforting to many devout Jews of that time. Matthew includes this material without appearing to notice that it is rendered unnecessary by his full discussion of the miraculous conception and birth. Luke, conscious to some extent of the incongruity of the included tradition, salves his

[1] Matt. 1:18; Luke 1:34, 35.

[2] In Mark 1:11 the voice of witnessing at the baptism is addressed to Jesus, while in Matt. 3:17 to the bystanders. For Matthew there is no need of the testimony on the part of Jesus. He is conscious of messianic mission from the first. Only the people needed the witness.

[3] Matt. 1:18–25; 2:1–23.

[4] Luke 1:11 ff.; 2:8–20.

[5] Matt. 1:1–17; Luke 3:23–28.

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literary and historical conscience by prefacing this note to the genealogical table copied by him, "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being *as was supposed* the son of Joseph."[1]

There is much evidence to support the contention that in Matthew and Luke the references of earlier traditions to purely human traits in the personality of Jesus are either modified or omitted under the influence of the conception held by these later Christian writers of their Master as a truly divine being through all of his ministry upon the earth, indeed through his entire earthly existence. The Logia is content to say of the preaching of Jesus that it was greater than that of Jonah, and of his wisdom that it exceeded Solomon's.[2] Matthew goes much farther than this. He makes Jesus tower above Moses, the traditional father of the Jewish Law. Indeed he goes so far as to represent Jesus on his own responsibility putting such an interpretation upon the leading rubrics of the Mosaic legislation as would constitute the interpreter a creator of an entirely new ethic far transcending all previous pronouncements in the realm of religion or of morals.[3]

Of course all this is done without any suggestion of a breaking away from Jewish religious antecedents in the words and work of Jesus.[4] Matthew is very careful to have the incidents in the life of his Lord fulfil in the most meticulous manner various sayings culled from the Jewish sacred writings. Instances of this are found in Matt. 2:15, where the words of Hos. 11:1 create in the writer's mind the necessity for a sojourn in Egypt of Joseph and Mary with their child, and notably in Matt. 21:1–11, where the rhetorical pleonasm of Zech. 9:9 leads the New Testament writer to change his Markan source (Mark 11:1–10) and introduce two animals into the account of the entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. The Matthaean sublimation of the personality of Jesus comes into clear perspective in the change from Mark 10:17, 18, "Why callest thou me good?" to Matt. 19:16, "Why askest thou me concerning the good?" The Markan record that Jesus refused to accept deific terms of address does not at all meet with the approval of the later author. Matthew changes Mark 6:3, "Is not this the carpenter?" to "Is not this the carpenter's son?" Matt. 13:55, for he is unwilling to allow that Jesus was ever designated as a carpenter by his contemporaries. An unmistakable instance of this tendency is found in the change from Mark 1:32, 33, "They brought unto him *all* that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils . . . . and he healed *many* that were sick of

[1] Luke 3:23.

[2] Matt. 12:38–42; Luke 11:29–32.

[3] Matt. 5:1 ff.; 19:7–9, 16–22.

[4] Matt. 5:17–19.

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divers diseases, and cast out *many* devils . . . . " to Matt. 8:16, ". . . . they brought unto him *many* that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirits with a word, and healed *all* that were sick." Matthew cannot endure the limitation of the healer's power so frankly admitted in the Markan narrative.

The saying of Jesus' relatives and friends reflecting on the sanity of the Galilean preacher is omitted by both Matthew and Luke when following the Markan source.[1] References in Mark that portray Jesus in the exhibition of human emotion are also strictly avoided.[2] In Mark, Jesus acknowledges his own ignorance of the time when the great day of judgment is to arrive, while Matthew, by dropping out the words "neither the Son," rather neatly avoids what to him would have been an impossible admission on the part of Jesus.[3]

In all the foregoing there is an agreement between Matthew and Luke that earlier presentations such as that of Mark must be relieved of elements which properly inhere in a personage operating, albeit supernaturally, within distinctly human limits. By both of these writers the supernatural features of the earlier pictures are brought into clearer light and the human elements are allowed to disappear. The comparison of these with the more primitive sources reveals the Christian interest in the supernatural personality and work of Jesus in the process of development from a conception of him as a prophetic functionary or a worker of wonders to that of him as possessing the power of a god. The earlier portrait of a mere human person operating by word or by deed in a supernatural fashion is transformed into a representation of one whose attitude, despite his human form and speech, is that of deity itself throughout the entire earthly career on record. Whether the author of the statement in Matt. 28:16 is or is not the author of the Gospel, it gives evidence of the perfection toward which this development steadily moved in the early years of the rise of Christianity as a world-religion. There the Lord of the Christians, in the white light that beats upon a solitary throne, is represented as being able to say, "All authority is given unto me in heaven and upon earth."

So far the sources being examined have shown elements mainly of a Hebraic cast with reference to the career of Jesus. From Paul to Matthew and Luke, although the Hellenistic environment never

[1] Mark 3:21; cf. Matt. 12:22 ff.; and Luke 11:14 ff.

[2] Mark 3:5; cf. Matt. 12 f. Mark 1:43; cf. Matt. 8:4. Mark 10:21; cf. Matt. 19:20 f.

[3] Mark 13:32; cf. Matt. 24:36.

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disappears, the bolder outlines of the picture of the early Christian's Lord stand out in distinctly Jewish colors. The urge of the messianic hopes cherished by the Jewish race is seen behind all the literature of the first beginnings of Christianity. Not that Messianism as such had no existence in the Hellenistic consciousness.[1] The Latin poet Virgil is only one among many who in this period gave literary expression to a longing that played no minor part in the life of the Mediterranean peoples. This poet in the *Aeneid* vi. 788 ff. refers to the emperor, his royal patron, as follows, "This is the man whom you have often heard promised to you, Augustus Caesar, offspring of a god, who shall establish again the golden age of Latium." From what has been discovered of the tendency among the inhabitants of Greece and Asia Minor to attach religious significance and heavenly hopes to the person of a Roman overlord[2] it is but natural to feel that literature such as that in the New Testament, coming to birth in more or less near contact with this kind of an environment, cannot have derived its eudaemonistic future exclusively from current Judaism. Yet it is not until early Christianity takes upon itself features similar to those found in the Fourth Gospel that the Jewish elements lose their paramount importance for the followers of Jesus. As the writer of this remarkable work contemplated the career of the founder of Christianity, the messianic concepts which had been so vigorous in the thinking of those Christians to whose religion the earlier literature had ministered, although present in the spoken or written tradition to which he had access, were by this time and in this locality so etiolated and weak that he was unable to use them in the corporate structure of his argument. His message has undoubtedly elements that are futuristic and of Jewish messianic lineage. Yet these have such a separateness from the author's main treatment of the supernatural personality and work of Jesus as to appear almost as extraneous and functionless as barnacles on the hull of a ship.

If the Jewish elements of the primitive Christian tradition have lost their charm for the author of the Fourth Gospel it is only that the Hellenistic elements, which operated in the early tradition with increasing

[1] The early literature of the Assyrio-Babylonian peoples as well as that of the Hellenes and the people of Latium is full of reference to a coming age whose happy character makes possible the patient endurance of present hardship in the anticipation of permanent future satisfaction.

[2] *τὸν ἀπὸ Ἄρεως καὶ Ἀφροδε(ι)της θεὸν ἐπιφανῆ καὶ κοινὸν τοῦ ἀνθρωπίνου βίου σωτῆρα.* An Ephesian inscription to Julius Caesar. Deissman, *op. cit.* (trans.), p. 348, n. 4.

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success to sublimate the character of Jesus and his work, may come into full prominence. The developmental process comes at this point to complete fruitage. The Lord of the Christian is become "very God of very God," and the present regnancy of his eternal kingdom permits scant importance to be attached to apocalyptic and future programs. The common Hellenistic notion that the divine and the human are in essence the same made it easy for the author of this Gospel to put the finishing touches to the picture of Jesus as a truly deific personality, while at the same time allowing that personality to express itself in a form undeniably human in every particular.

To the writer of this later document every human being has the Logos element.[1] In pre-Christian times this element was in more noteworthy diffusion among the Jewish race in preparation for the coming of Logos fully in the person of Jesus. The Jews, racially considered, had refused to accept Jesus as God; that is, as the completest expression in human form of the Logos. By such an attitude they stood shorn of all place in the new kingdom. Where the writers of Mark or of Matthew introduce sects of Judaism, such as the Pharisees and Sadducees, or, with a little wider scope, the scribes, the author of the Fourth Gospel almost invariably makes use of the national term "the Jews," thereby accusing the nation as a whole of the unpardonable sin, namely, the refusal to see in Jesus one whose earthly being was fully contained by the divine essence.[2]

On the one side of the evangelist's shield there are somber shadows surrounding the repudiation of Jesus by the Jewish race. The other side of the shield is radiant with hope for the Hellenistic peoples under the sway of Rome. The message of Jesus may have been an enigma to Nicodemus,[3] the rabbi of Jerusalem, but its terms are the common property of the humblest folk of the Ephesian locality, acquainted as they are with the various mystery cults of the Empire. The phrase "born again," so familiar to us from our acquaintance with the Nicodemus narrative, was in widest use among the votaries of the Hellenistic mystery religions.[4] Thus the significance of Jesus is turned away from the somewhat circumscribed Jewish racial circle of the earlier sources and interpreted in terms that are calculated to appeal urgently to the entire Hellenistic civilization of that period.

In the Logia the figure of Jesus is that of the Jewish prophet. His work is highly ethical, calling the people to more exalted standards of

[1] John 1:3, 9.
[2] John 2:18; 5:10 ff.; 6:41 ff.
[3] John 3:1–15.
[4] Pfleiderer, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

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human relationship; truly religious, stressing the possibilities of closer fellowship with God, the great Father of all; eminently practical, expressing itself in the removal of individual and social disabilities; self-renunciatory, demanding on the part of both teacher and disciple entire relinquishment of home comforts and even family obligations; inerrantly Jewish, linking itself up with the prophetism of John the Baptist, albeit heralding a new and more revolutionary order of things; and in its later stages markedly eschatological, presenting the repentance preacher as one who was to come again "in the name of the Lord"[1] to sit in judgment, along with his close followers, upon the faithless and the unrepentant. In the Fourth Gospel the discourse material is not so much ethical as theological and apologetic. Here the practical gives way to the philosophic treatment. The miracles are wrought not so much for the amelioration of human conditions as for the settled purpose of producing faith in Jesus as the heaven-sent Logos.[2]

Paul could conceive of greater exaltation coming to his Lord because of the humility of his coming to earth and the covenantal efficacy of his death. In the Fourth Gospel there is no diminution at any time of divine power on the part of Jesus. He maintains all through his career the attitude of deity, knowing every event in the womb of the future. As for the death of Jesus, instead of associating it with the setting aside of the Jewish Law or with speculation regarding the righteousness of God, the author of this Hellenistic-Christian message thinks of it as being solely for the purpose of making possible a wider spreading of the Logos than could obtain so long as it was confined in the earthly body of Jesus. The cross, which had such doctrinal significance for the thought of Paul, figures for the evangelist simply as an instrument for the elevation of the earthly Jesus, that all may see in him the divine essence and in acknowledging this fact may receive the same for themselves.[3]

Mark could believe that the supernatural character of Jesus' person and work dated from his baptism experience. Matthew and Luke could go farther and find this peculiar phenomenon attached to the birth. It remained for the writer of the Fourth Gospel to carry the significance back into eternity itself. To him the Logos was "in the beginning with God" and in fact was identical with God.[4] For him Jesus, the human embodiment of this Logos, was able to say to his Jewish compatriots,

[1] Luke 13:35; Matt. 19:28.

[2] John 9:3; 11:4.

[3] John 3:14.

[4] John 1:1. The Logos was "God-stuff."

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"Before Abraham was, I am."[1] Matthew could find in the Jewish Scriptures various references to the career of Jesus, especially with regard to its messianic aspects.[2] The evangelist makes Moses himself a specific witness to Jesus.[3] The very Scriptures themselves testify of the eternal life which Jesus mediates. In mystic fashion Abraham, the progenitor of the Hebrew people, had communion with Jesus and "rejoiced to see his day."[4] The evangelist goes even farther than the earlier Gospel writers in demonstrating the way in which Scripture was fulfilled in the events of Jesus' ministry. An example of this is found in John 19:28, where the writer represents Jesus in the last moments on the cross as crying out, "I thirst," not because of dire physical need, but in order "that the Scripture be fulfilled." This last reference is in complete accord with the dominant motif throughout the Fourth Gospel. The result of its operation is seen in the fact that all the earthly incidents and all the human features in the ministry of Jesus appear to have been prearranged perfectly in a scheme having for its main object the revelation of the god or Logos element through every word and act of Jesus. The miracle narratives almost without exception are set forth by the writer, not in the natural and historical sequence observed more or less clearly in the synoptic sources, but in order to serve as introductions to long discourses in which Jesus teaches, in terms coined in a Hellenistic, philosophic mint, doctrines having to do with the uniqueness of his Logos-filled person and with the all-embracing significance of his mission upon the earth. That this procedure does violence in any way to historical credence or to the psychology of the Jewish mind creates no problem for the author of the Fourth Gospel, although it has done this for his interpreters almost ever since the appearance and first use of the document in both Christian and non-Christian circles.

All the sources preceding the Fourth Gospel agree in making the earthly career of Jesus preliminary to a future inauguration of a messianic order. The official position of Jesus while upon earth is thought by their compilers to be somewhat inferior to that which he gained through his death and which is to be revealed in all its plenitude at the inception of the apocalyptic régime. Throughout all these writings there is a forward look. In the Fourth Gospel this forward look has to all intents and purposes entirely disappeared. Messianic hopes are no longer needed. The coming of the spirit upon the first followers of Jesus—given by the Evangelist as dating from the day of the resurrection experiences

[1] John 9:58.
[2] Matt. 2:5, 6, 15, 23; 4:15; 21:5; 26:54; 27:9.
[3] John 5:46.
[4] John 9:56.

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and not from Pentecost[1] as stated by the other writers—actually introduced the new order of things. This obviated all necessity for desiring a future apocalyptic kingdom. In the view of the Johannine writer the day of judgment is not a future necessity but a present and dark reality.[2] It is not so much universal as individual, coming to each as he assumes a definite attitude to Jesus as the heaven-sent Logos-Savior. In this scheme no congruous place is left for Jewish national hopes attached to the return of a messianic ruler. Jesus can face Pilate with the assertion that he is king in a realm of truth standing aloof from all national or political affiliations and yet embracing every earthly and human relation in a spiritual suzerainty.[3] The emphasis in the earlier sources is placed on the zeal and faithfulness of the Christian in preparation for the imminent appearance of a new age.[4] The emphasis in the Fourth Gospel finds itself coupled with passive acceptance of the Logos element by faith in Jesus as the pre-eminent Logos-filled personage, and with the enjoyment of a mystic union with the deity here and now.[5] For those who possess this experience an eternal spiritual order interpenetrating and glorifying all human affairs has become a satisfying religious reality.[6]

This sketch of the development in early reflection upon the character and work of Jesus gives a hint of the importance of viewing the New Testament, not as a book whose parts dovetail into each other like the chapters of a modern novel, but as a collection of writings each with its own historical, political, social, and even topographical affiliations. To be rightly understood, the different messages of these various documents must be related to the milieu of life and thought from which they emerged. To be correctly appreciated, the writers must be allowed to speak for themselves, each in his own tongue and each according to the time and locality of his own religious experience. The dominating idea throughout the New Testament is inseparably associated with the one whose life and teaching are accepted as contributing in a singularly unique fashion to the religious satisfaction of different individuals and different communities. Each particular group creates an interpretation of the hero's career in terms of its own religious achievements and ideals. Each writer presents his Savior in relation to his own world-view.[7] Thus

[1] John 20:22. [3] John 19:38. [5] John 3:16, 36, etc.

[2] John 3:18; 4:25. [4] Matt. 24:14. [6] John 6:41 ff.; 8:51; 12:36; 15:1 ff.

[7] "The human mind is a structure which has grown up under certain conditions, and the thoughts which it forms and the criticisms which it passes on its thoughts depend upon that structure. Not only the thought but the experience which they are to interpret is, again, conditioned."—L. T. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution*, II, 267.

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can be traced in the New Testament various pictures of Jesus differing in detail according to the world-views of the different groups, yet all agreeing happily in the treatment of but one personality, who was to them "the Lord Jesus Christ."

Christianity of the so-called dogmatic type, whether Catholic or Protestant, building as it does its structure of religious concepts upon foundations furnished by formularies of the first few centuries of our era, has been satisfied, nay jealous, to guard a composite representation of Jesus. On close examination this is found to assume an identical plane, emotional, mental, and temporal, for the whole of the New Testament literature. With the rapid progress of educational development in present-day civilization there is growing, *pari passu*, an increasingly intelligent demand for a reinterpretation of the literary remains so closely interwoven with the sources of the Christian religion; this in order that the genetic connections and environmental affinities of such a remarkable world-phenomenon may be more correctly observed and appraised. If modern life in all its phases is to feel more potently the impact of Christianity as a religious movement of supreme worth, this religion must be loosed from the bondage, ecclesiastical or otherwise, which inevitably prevents its being regarded as an integral part of human development. Only as this is effected can Christianity with its many rich and varied elements come into true perspective as marking out a pathway of vital religious experience trod by Jesus and his followers. Such a procedure "calls for a restoration of the whole thought-world" in which the New Testament writers and their first readers lived and worked.[1] The actual complex life-conditions surrounding these men of faith must be studied and interpreted in order that the triumphant spirit which is the "prime original" of Christianity may come to its own in the life of men today.

[1] E. D. Burton in *A Guide to the Study of the Christian Religion*, p. 177.

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INDEX

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INDEX

Abraham, 59, 65
Academy, later, 11
Acts, Book of, 43, 55
Adonis, consort of Aphrodite in Syrian cult, 49
Aeschines, 49
Ahriman, evil spirit of Persism, 15
Alexandria: literature of, 13; Judaism in, 14
Anaxagoras, his principle of creation, 7
Aphrodite, 49
Apocalypse, 21
Apocalyptists, 21, 28, 29, 35, 44
Apollinarian games, 49
Apuleius, Metamorphoses, 50.
Aristarchus of Samos, 2
Aristippus, 9
Aristotle, 7, 8, 12, 14, 20
Asia Minor, 62
Assumption of Moses, 27
Astarte, 15, 49
Atargatis, 15, 49
Athens, 2
Attis, 49, 50
Augustus, 54, 62
Aurelian, 12

Baur, August, definition of Weltanschauung, 5
Bel, 12
Beltis, 15
Bethlehem, 59
Boutroux, E. M. M., five stages of mystic life, 40

Caesarea-Philippi, 41
Caird, Edward: compares Plato and Aristotle, 8; Skeptics, 11; mysticism, 37
Charles, R. H., on Philo's world-view, 14
Chrysippus, 12
Cicero, on the Skeptics, 11
Cleanthes the Stoic, 2, 10, 28
Clement of Alexandria, 3, n. 1
Colossians, creation theory of, 21, 22
Corinthians, Epistle to, 27, 30, 31, 54
Crates, 31
Cumont, Franz, on religious societies, 50
Cybele, 49
Cynic-Stoics, 30, 48

David, 59
Delacroix Henri, three stages in mystic life, 39, 42.
Demeter, 49
Democritus, 5
Demosthenes, 49
Dionysius the Areopagite, 38
Dionysus, 21, 49

Eleusinian games, 49
Enoch, Book of, 13, 27
Ephesians, Epistle to, 27, 30
Ephesus, 48, 63
Epictetus, 30
Epicurus, 5
Eshmun, 49
Eucken, Rudolf: on Plato, 6; on Aristotle, 8

Galileo, 2
Gayomart, 15
Genesis: narratives, 22; cosmogony, 27
Gnostic, 13, 14, 15, 16, 29
Gomorrah, 18
Greece, 62

Hades, 17
Hebrews, Epistle to, 22, 31, 44
Helios, 12
Hellene, 3
Heraclitus, 3
Hesiod, 3
Hicks, R. D., concerning Stoic attitude toward life, 10
Homer, his physics, 3

Ishtar, 48
Isis, 49

Digitized by Google

Jerusalem, 63
John the Baptist, 57, 59, 64
Jonah, 60
Joseph, 59, 60
Latium, 62
Lazarus, 32
Levant, 17
Logia, 55, 58, 60
Logos: Stoic, 9; Philonic, 13; Johannine, 19, 20, 22 ff., 28, 31, 36, 45 ff., 63 ff.
Lucius, 50

Maccabees, Fourth Book of, 13, 21
Marcus Aurelius, 11
Marduk, 26
Mark, Gospel of, 41, 57, 63 ff.
Martha, 32
Matthew, 41, 59 ff., 63 ff.
Messianism: Jewish, 54, 56, 58, 59; Hellenistic, 62
Metamorphoses of Apuleius, 50
Mithras, 49, 54, 58
Moses, 44, 60
Musonius Rufus, 30, 31

Nathanael, 22
New Testament, 1, 17, 21
Nicodemus, 63
Noah, 56

Ormuzd, good spirit of Persism, 15
Orphic: hymns, 20; communities, 51

Palestine, 59
Palmyra, 12
Paul, 17 ff., 18, 28 ff., 42 ff., 53 ff., 64
Pentecost, 66
Persephone, 21
Persian: its dualism, 15; world-empire, 52
Peter, 17; Second Epistle, 31
Pharisees, 63
Philo, 3; theology, 13; logos, 19, 21
Pilate, 66
Plato, 1, n. 1; world-view, 6 ff.; sidereal-ism, 12; Timaeus, 13, 20, 28
Plotinus, 39

Revelation, Book of, 27
Ritschl, definition of Weltanschauung, 5
Rome, 63

Sabazius, 49
Sadducees, 63
Samos, 2
Seneca, 11, 28, 30, 31
Serapis, 49, 54
Sheol, 3
Shepherd of Hermas, 36
Sinai, 44
Skeptics, 11
Socrates, 2, 31
Sodom, 17
Sol Invictus, 12
Solomon, 60
Stoics: world-view, monistic, 9, 18; world-soul, 22, 28, 29

Tammuz, 48
Temple, Jewish, 44
Tertullian, 49
Testaments of Twelve Patriarchs, 27
Thessalonica, 18
Thomas, 47
Tiamat, 26
Tigris-Euphrates, 11, 26
Torah, 2, 36, 44, 53

Virgil, 62

Weltanschauung, definitions of, 5 ff.
Wisdom, Book of, 13, 17, 19, 21

Yom Yahweh, in Hebrew prophetism, 44

Zealots, 56
Zeno, 9
Zoroastrianism, 15

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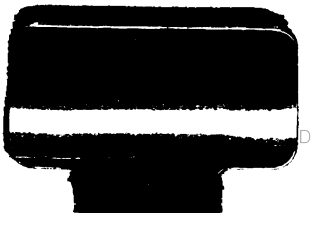

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